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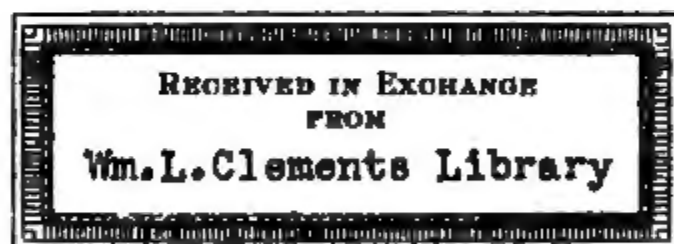
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THE
Parliamentary Register;

O R,

H I S T O R Y

O F T H E

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES

O F T H E

HOUSE OF COMMONS;

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF

The most interesting **SPEECHES** and **MOTIONS**; accurate
Copies of the most remarkable **LETTERS** and **PAPERS**;
of the most material **EVIDENCE**, **PETITIONS**, &c.
laid before and offered to the House,

DURING THE

FIRST SESSION of the **EIGHTEENTH PARLIAMENT**

O F

GREAT BRITAIN.

VOL. I.

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Printed for **J. DEBRETT**, opposite **BURLINGTON HOUSE**,
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1797.

*Vol. 1 of Minutes to the
1821-22
Vol. 72*

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THE
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OF THE
PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES

OF THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS,
In the FIRST SESSION of the
Eighteenth Parliament of GREAT BRITAIN,
Appointed to be holden at WESTMINSTER,
On TUESDAY, the 27th of SEPTEMBER, 1796.

The following are correct LISTS of BOTH HOUSES of PARLIAMENT, summoned to meet on TUESDAY the 27th of SEPTEMBER, 1796.

Speaker, the R. H. ALEXANDER Lord LOUGHBOROUGH.

† Those with this mark, * under age. ‡ Roman-Catholic Peers.

PEERS OF THE BLOOD ROYAL, 4.

H. R. H. George-Augustus-Frederic, Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall and Rothsay, Earl of Chester and Carric, Electoral Prince of Brunswic-Lunenburgh, Baron of Renfrew, Lord of the Isles, Great Steward of Scotland

H. R. H. Frederic, D. of York and Albany, E. of Ulster in Ireland

H. R. H. Wm. Hen. D. of Clarence and St. Andrews, E. of Munster in Ireland

H. R. H. Wm. Hen. D. of Gloucester and Edinburgh, E. of Connaught in Ireland.

DUKES, 19.

Cha. Howard, D. of Norfolk, E. of Surrey

Edward Adolphus Seymour, D. of Somerset, Ld. Seymour

Charles Lenox, D. of Richmond, E. of March, D. of Lenox in Scotland

Augustus Henry Fitzroy, D. of Grafton, E. of Euston

Henry Somerset, D. of Beaufort, M. of Worcester

Aubrey Beauclerc, D. of St. Alban's, E. of Burford

Francis Osborne, D. of Leeds, M. of Carmarthen, V. Dumblain in Scotland

Francis Russell, D. of Bedford, M. of Tavistock

Wm. Cavendish, D. of Devonshire, Marq. of Hartington

Geo. Spencer, D. of Marlborough, M. of Blandford

* John Henry Manners, D. of Rutland, M. of Granby

Douglas Hamilton, D. of Brandon, Ld. Dutton and Hamilton, Duke of Hamilton in Scotland

Brownlow Bertie, D. of Ancaster and Kesteven, M. of Lindsey

Wm. Hen. Cavendish Bentinck, D. of Portland, M. of Titchfield

Wm. Montagu, D. of Manchester, V. Mandeville

Fred. Sackville, D. of Dorset, E. of Middlesex

Francis Egerton, D. of Bridgewater, M. of Brackley

John Pelham, D. of Newcastle, E. of Lincoln, B. Say and Clinton

Hugh Percy, D. of Northumberland, E. Percy.

MARQUISES, 11.

Francis George Powlet, M. of Winchester, E. of Wiltshire

Geo. Grenville Nugent Temple, M. of Buckingham, E. Temple, E. of Nugent in Ireland

William Petty, M. of Landsdown, E. of Wycombe, E. of Shelburne in Ireland

Granville Leveson Gower, M. of Stafford, E. Gower

George Townshend, M. Townshend

James Cecil, M. of Salisbury, V. Cranborn

Thomas Thynne, M. of Bath, V. Weymouth

John James Hamilton, M. of Abercorn, V. Hamilton, E. of Abercorn in Scotland, and V. Strabane in Ireland

Charles Cornwallis, M. Cornwallis, V. Brome

Francis Seymour, M. and E. of Hertford, E. of Yarmouth, Lord Conway in Ireland

John Stuart, M. of Bute, E. of Windsor, E. of Bute in Scotland.

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† Charles Talbot, E. of Shrewsbury, Ld. Talbot, E. of Waterford and Wexford in Ireland

Edw. Smith Stanley, E. of Derby, Ld. Stanley

George Augustus Herbert, E. of Pembroke and Montgomery, Ld. Herbert

John Howard, E. of Suffolk and Berkshire, V. Andover

Henry Cecil, E. of Exeter, Ld. Burleigh

Spencer Compton, E. of Northampton, Ld. Compton

Basil Fielding, E. of Denbigh, V. Fielding, E. of Desmond in Ireland

John Fane, E. of Westmorland, Ld. Burghersh

Charles Henry Mordaunt, E. of Peterborough and Monmouth, V. Mordaunt

Geo. Harry Grey, E. of Stamford and E. of Warrington, L. Grey of Groby

George Finch, E. of Winchelsea and Nottingham, V. Maidstone

Philip Stanhope, E. of Chesterfield, Ld. Stanhope

Sackville Tufton, E. of Thanet, Ld. Tufton

John Montague, E. of Sandwich, V. Hinchinbrook

Wm. Anne Holles Capel, E. of Essex, V. Malden

James Brudenell, E. of Cardigan, Lord Brudenell

Frederic Howard, E. of Carlisle, V. Morpeth

Hen. Scott, E. of Doncaster, Ld. Tyndale, D. of Buccleugh in Scotland

Ant. Ashley Cooper, E. of Shaftesbury, Ld. Ashley

Fred. Augustus Berkeley, E. of Berkeley, V. Dursley

Willoughby Bertie, E. of Abingdon, Ld. Norreys

Henry Noel, E. of Gainsborough, V. Campden

Other Windsor Hickman, E. of Plymouth, Ld. Windsor

George Augusta Lumley Saunderson, E. of Scarborough, V. Lumley, V. Lumley in Ireland

Wm. Henry Nassau de Zulestein, E. of Rochford, V. Tunbridge

Wm. Charles Keppel, E. of Albemarle, V. Bury

Geo. Wm. Coventry, E. of Coventry, V. Deerhurst

Geo. Buffy Villiers, E. of Jersey, V. Villiers

John Poulett, E. Poulett, V. Hinton

Geo. James Cholmondeley, E. Cholmondeley, V. Malpas, V. Cholmondeley in Ireland

Edward Harley, E. of Oxford and E. Mortimer, Ld. Harley

Robert Shirley, E. Ferrers, V. Tamworth

Frederic Thomas Wentworth, E. of Strafford, V. Wentworth, and B. Raby.

William Legge, E. of Dartmouth, V. Lewisham

Cha. Bennet, E. of Tankerville, L. Offulston

Heneage Finch, E. of Aylesford, L. Guernsey

Fred. Hervey, E. of Bristol, L. Hervey, Bishop of Derry in Ireland

Henry Yelverton, E. of Suffex, V. Longueville

*George Augustus Cowper, E. Cowper, V. Fordwich

Charles Stanhope, E. Stanhope, V. Mahon

Rebert Sherard, E. of Harborough, Ld. Sherard, Ld. Leitrim in Ireland

George Parker, E. of Macclesfield, V. Parker

George Fermor, E. of Pomfret, Ld. Lemster

James Graham, E. Graham, Ld. Graham, D. of Montrose in Scotland

John Kerr, E. Kerr, Ld. Kerr, D. of Roxburgh in Scotland

*John James Waldegrave, E. Waldegrave, V. Chewton

Jn. Ashburnham, E. of Ashburnham, V. St. Asaph

Richard Howard, E. of Effingham, Ld. Howard

Horatio Walpole, E. of Orford, V. Walpole

Charles Stanhope, E. of Harrington, V. Peterham

John Wallop, E. of Portsmouth, V. Lymington

Geo. Grevile, E. Brooke and Warwick, Ld. Brooke

George Hobart, E. of Buckinghamshire, Ld. Hobart

W. W. Fitzwilliam, E. Fitzwilliam, V. Milton

Geo. Edw. Henry Arthur Herbert, E. of Powis, V. Ludlow

Geo. Wyndham, E. of Egremont, Ld. Cockermouth

Geo. Simon Harcourt, E. Harcourt, V. Nuneham

George Augustus North, E. of Guilford, Ld. North

Philip Yorke, E. of Hardwicke, V. Royston

Wm. Harry Vane, E. of Darlington, V. Barnard

Henry Bellasyse, E. of Fauconberg, Ld. Bellasyse

Henry Thomas Fox, E. of Ilchester, Ld. Stayordale

John Richard West, E. De Lawar, V. Cantalupe

Jacob Pleydell Bouverie, E. of Radnor, V. Folkestone

Geo. John Spencer, E. Spencer, V. Althorp

John Pitt, E. of Chatham, V. Pitt

Henry Bathurst, E. Bathurst, Ld. Apsey

Arthur Hill, E. of Hillsborough, V. Fairford, M. of Downshire in Ireland

Thomas Brudenell Bruce, E. of Aylesbury, Ld. Bruce

Thomas Villiers, E. of Clarendon, Lord Hyde

Henry Nevill, E. of Abergavenny, V. Nevill

Geo. Townshend Ferrars, Earl of Leicester, Lord de Ferrars

Henry Bayley Paget, E. of Uxbridge, L. Paget

James Lowther, E. of Lonsdale, V. Lonsdale and Lowther
Alexander Gordon, E. of Norwich, Ld. Gordon, D. of Gordon in
Scotland

*Charles Chetwynd Talbot Chetwynd, E. Talbot, V. Ingestrie
Rd. Grosvenor, E. Grosvenor, V. Belgrave
Edward Huffey Montagu, E. Beaulieu, Ld. Montagu
John Jefferies Pratt, E. Camden, V. Bayham
John Murray, E. and B. Strange, D. of Athol in Scotland
Richard Howe, E. Howe, V. and L. Howe, V. Howe in Ireland
Richard Edgcumbe, E. of Mount-Edgcumbe, V. Valletort
Hugh Fortescue, E. Fortescue, V. Ebrington
Edward Digby, E. of Digby, V. Colehill, Ld. Digby in Ireland
Algernon Percy, E. of Beverley, Ld. Lovaine
Joseph Damer, E. of Dorchester, V. Milton, L. Milton in Ireland
David Murray, E. of Mansfield, Lord Murray, V. Stormont, in
Scotland

Henry Herbert, Earl of Carnarvon, Lord Porchester
Charles Jenkinson, Earl of Liverpool, Lord Hawkesbury

VISCOUNTS, 14.

George Devereux, Viscount Hereford
Geo. Richard St-John, V. Bolingbroke and St-John
Geo. Evelyn Boscawen, Viscount Falmouth
George Byng, Viscount Torrington
Wm. Rob. Fitzgerald, V. Leinster, D. of Leinster in Ireland
Thomas Noel, V. Wentworth
William Courtenay, Viscount Courtenay
William Ward, Viscount Dudley and Ward
Charles Maynard, Viscount Maynard
Thomas Hampden, Viscount Hampden
Charles Sackville Germain, Viscount Sackville
Thomas Townshend, Viscount Sidney
Samuel Hood, Viscount Hood, Lord Hood in Ireland
Charles Medowe Pierrepont, Viscount Newark, Baron Pierrepont

BARONS, 110.

Edward Southwell, Lord De Clifford
Thomas Stapleton, Lord Le Despencer
George Tuchet, Lord Audley
Robert George William Trefusis, Lord Clinton
‡Charles Philip Stourton, Lord Stourton
John Peyto Verney, Lord Willoughby de Broke
*George William Frederic Osborne, Lord Coniers

Henry Beauchamp St-John, Lord St-John of Bletso

John Griffin Griffin, Lord Howard and Braybrooke

† Robert Edward Petre, Lord Petre

Gregory Twisleton, Lord Say and Sele

† Henry Arundel, Lord Arundel

John Bligh, Lord Clifton, Earl of Darnley in Ireland

† Charles Dormer, Lord Dormer

Henry Roper, Lord Teynham

William Byron, Lord Byron

William Craven, Lord Craven

† Charles Clifford, Lord Clifford

Edm. Boyle, Lord Boyle, Earl of Corke and Orrery in Ireland

Robert Auriol Drummond Hay, Lord Hay, Earl of Kinnoull in Scotland

Henry Willoughby, Lord Middleton

George Onslow, Lord Onslow and Cranley

Charles Marham, Lord Romney

Charles Sloane Cadogan, Lord Cadogan

*Peter King, Lord King

John Monson, Lord Monson

Thomas Bromley, Lord Montfort

John How, Lord Chedworth

Edwin Sandys, Lord Sandys

Frederic Ponsonby, Lord Ponsonby, Earl of Besborough in Ireland

Horatio Walpole, Lord Walpole

Henry Stawell Bilson Legge, Lord Stawell

Lewis Thomas Watson, Lord Sondes

*Thomas Weddell Robinson, Lord Grantham

Nath. Curzon, Lord Scarfdale

Frederic Irby, Lord Boston

Thomas Pelham, Lord Pelham

Henry Richard Fox, Lord Holland

John James Perceval, Lord Lovel and Holland, Earl of Egmont in Ireland

George Venables Vernon, Lord Vernon

Francis Reynolds Morton, Lord Ducie

John Campbell, Lord Sundrige, Duke of Argyll in Scotland

Martin Bladin Hawke, Lord Hawke

Jeffery Amherst, Lord Amherst

Brownlow Cust, Lord Browlow

George Pitt, Lord Rivers

Nath. Ryder, Lord Harrowby

*William Thomas Foley, Lord Foley

Edward Thurlow, Lord Thurlow
Alexander Wedderburn, Lord Loughborough
George De Cardonnal, Lord Dynevor
Thomas De Grey, Lord Walsingham
William Bagot, Lord Bagot
Cha. Fitzroy, Lord Southampton
*Richard Barré Dunning, Lord Ashburton
William Norton, Lord Grantley
George Rodney, Lord Rodney
Francis Rawdon Hastings, Lord Rawdon, Earl of Moira in Ireland
Thomas Pitt, Lord Camelford,
Henry Frederic Carteret, Lord Carteret
Edward Eliot Craggs, Lord Eliot
Thomas James Bulkeley, Lord Bulkeley, Vis. Bulkeley in Ireland
Thomas Egerton, Lord Grey De Wilton
Charles Cocks, Lord Somers
John Parker, Lord Boringdon
Thomas Noel Hill, Lord Berwick
James Dutton, Lord Sherborne
*Henry James Montagu Scot, Lord Montagu
William Douglas, Lord Douglas, Duke of Queensberry in Scotland
George de la Poer Beresford, L. Tyrone, M. of Waterford in Ireland
Richard Boyle, Lord Careleton, Earl of Shannon in Ireland
John Hufsey Delaval, Lord Delaval, Lord Delaval in Ireland
Harbord Harbord, Lord Suffield
Guy Carleton, Lord Dorchester
Francis Augustus Eliott, Lord Heathfield
Lloyd Kenyon, Lord Kenyon
James Harris, Lord Malmesbury
Arthur Chichester, Lord Fisherwick, M. of Donegall in Ireland
James Duff, Lord Fife, Earl of Fife in Ireland
James Bucknall Grimston, Ld. Verulam, V. Grimston in Ireland
Archibald Douglas, Lord Douglas, of Douglas
Henry Gage, Lord Gage, Viscount Gage in Ireland
William Wyndham Grenville, Lord Grenville
George Douglas, Lord Douglas, Earl of Morton in Scotland
William Eden, Lord Auckland, Lord Auckland in Ireland
John Fitzpatrick, L. Upper Ossory, E. of Upper Ossory in Ireland
Edward Clive, Lord Clive, Lord Clive in Ireland
Henry Phipps, Lord Mulgrave, Lord Mulgrave in Ireland
William Henry Lyttelton, Ld. Lyttelton, Ld. Westcote in Ireland
Welbore Ellis, Lord Mendip
Henry Bridgeman, Lord Bradford

James Peachey, Lord Selfey
 Thomas Dundas, Lord Dundas
 Asheton Curzon, Lord Curzon
 Charles Anderson Pelham, Lord Yarborough
 Francis Stewart, Lord Stewart, Earl of Moray in Scotland
 John Stewart, Lord Stewart, Earl of Galloway in Scotland
 James Stopford, Lord Saltersford, Earl of Courtown in Ireland
 Geo. Macartney, Lord Macartney, Earl of Macartney in Ireland
 John Ch. Burton, Lord Dawnay, Viscount Downe in Ireland
 Geo. Broderick, Lord Broderick, Viscount Middleton in Ireland
 Alexander Hood, Lord Bridport
 John Rous, Lord Rous
 Henry Gough Calthorpe, Lord Calthorpe
 Peter Burrell, Lord Gwydir
 Francis Bassett, Lord de Dunstanville
 Edward Lascelles, Lord Harewood
 John Rolle, Lord Rolle
 John Campbell, Lord Cawdor.

SCOTS PEERS, 16. *Elected July 7, 1796.*

George Hay, Marquis and Earl of Tweeddale, Earl Gifford, Viscount
 Wallden, Lord Yester
 George Hay, Earl of Errol†, Baron Hay

† *The Earl of Lauderdale entered the three following Protests against
 the Election :*

I.

I James, Earl of Lauderdale, do hereby protest, That the Clerks of Session, officiating at this election of a Peer to sit in the ensuing Parliament, shall not receive the votes of any Peer of Scotland, created a Peer of Great Britain since the Union, and not having in his person an English Peerage created before that period, for the following, amongst other, reasons :

That it is inconsistent with the law and constitution of this country, and with every principle of Representation by election, as also with the true intent and meaning of the 22d article of the Union, and of the 8th act of the Parliament of Scotland 1707, confirmed in the Parliament of England, and declared by both to be equally valid, as if it had been engrossed in the Treaty of Union, that a Peer of Scotland, sitting in the Parliament of Great Britain, by virtue of a Patent of Peerage granted since the said Union, should also elect a Peer to represent him.

(Signed) LAUDERDALE.

II.

I James, Earl of Lauderdale, do protest, That the Earldom of Errol was, from its original creation of male fee, as sufficiently appears from

Alexander Kennedy, Earl of Cassilis, Lord Kennedy

John Bowes Lyon, Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorn, Lord Lyon
and Glamis

Patrick Crichton, Earl of Dumfries, Lord Crichton

many documents on the publick records of this Country, and more particularly from a charter under the Great Seal of James V. dated the 13th of December, 1541, to George Hay of Logiealmond, as heir-male to William, Earl of Errol, of the estate and heritable office of Constabulary, upon the narrative, that the King was desirous that the family honours and heritable office of the Constabulary should remain and continue
“ hæredibus masculis cum cognominibus de Hay in omnibus temporibus futuris prout fuerunt in temporibus elapsis.”

That the said Earldom continued to descend under the original limitation till the year 1666, when, by a charter, dated Whitehall, November 13th, 1666, under the Great Seal of Charles the Second, proceeding on His Majesty's sign manual, the original limitations of this title were considerably altered.

That by this charter it was given : first, to Earl Gilbert, and the heirs-male of his body. Secondly, to the heirs-female of his body. Thirdly, to the heirs he should appoint, by a writing under his hand, and under the conditions to be therein expressed. Fourthly, to the heirs-male, and of tailzie and provision in the former limitations. Fifthly, to Earl Gilbert's heirs-male whatsoever.

That under none of the limitations of this charter, unless a nomination had been executed by the said Gilbert Earl of Errol, could the person now assuming that title, claim the honours of Errol; yet there nowhere exists such a nomination, nor any future confirmation of it by the Crown, without which, if such nomination did exist, it would be invalid, as no deed of nomination can operate as a conveyance, or limitation of a Peerage, unless subsequently confirmed by the Sovereign.

That subsequent to this Charter, in the year 1666, there exists no alteration in the limitations of the honours of Errol; for the charter granted by Charles II. of date the 4th of March 1674, to John Earl of Errol, under which the person now assuming the title of Errol, as heir-of-line, is supposed to hold his estates, never can be deemed effectual to convey any title of honour : it does not specify the dates of the deeds of nomination, supposed to be executed by Gilbert Earl of Errol; neither does it state whether they contained procuratories of resignation for resigning the titles of dignity into the hands of the Sovereign. On the contrary, this Charter seems rather to proceed on the tailzie executed by Earl Gilbert on the 21st September 1666, which was the warrant of, and must have been exhausted by, the charter past by Earl Gilbert, on the thirteenth of November that year.

That further, this charter is dated at Edinburgh, and not at the residence of the Sovereign; it is also passed on a common signature, dated at the same place, like grants of lands, and not on a sign manual, or royal signature, dated at the residence of the Sovereign, which is by law deemed necessary to convey, confirm, or alter the limitations of a Peerage.

That it cannot be pretended, that, antecedent to the Union, there existed any Sitting in Parliament, on the said charter 1674, as John of Kil-

Thomas Bruce, Earl of Elgin and Kincardin, Lord Kinloss
 George Ramsey, Earl of Dalhousie, Lord Ramsey
 William Carnegie, Earl of Northesk, Lord Rosehill
 George Gordon, Earl of Aboyne, Lord Strathaven
 John Campbell, Earl of Breadalbane, Viscount Glenorchy
 George Boyle, Earl of Glasgow, Lord Boyle
 John Dalrymple, Earl of Stair, Viscount Dalrymple
 James Somerville, Lord Somerville
 William Shaw Cathcart, Lord Cathcart
 James Sandilands, Lord Torphichen
 Francis Napier, Lord Napier.

PEERESSES in their own Right, by Creation or Descent.

Jemina Campbell, Marchioness Grey, Baroness Lucas
 Jane Murray, Countess of Mansfield
 Elizabeth Somerset, B. de Bottetourt, Duch. Dow. of Beaufort
 Getrude Brand, Baroness Dacre
 Priscilla Barbara Elizabeth Burrell, Baroness Willoughby de Eresby
 Elizabeth Rawdon, Baroness Hungerford
 Catharine Vane, Baroness of St. John de Basing
 Hester Pitt, Baroness Chatham
 Henrietta Laura Pulteney, Baroness of Bath
 Susannah Hood, Baroness Hood.

Iour, Earl of Errol, and Charles Earl of Errol, were entitled to this dignity, as well under the old limitation of the honours to heirs-male, as under the third, fourth, and fifth limitations in the charter 1666 to Earl Gilbert, proceeding on his Majesty's sign manual, as above recited.

That referring your Lordships to the documents in the public records of this country with which you must be presumed to be acquainted, and, which, for your more accurate information, I have this day called for, I do protest against the vote of the person present being received as Earl of Errol, and I do here intimate to the Peers, that any votes given in favour of the person now assuming the title of Errol, must be of no avail; for which reason I further protest against the Clerks receiving or reckoning upon such votes in making their return.

(Signed) LAUDERDALE.

III.

I James, Earl of Lauderdale, do protest, That I ought to have been returned one of the sixteen Peers to represent the Peerage of Scotland in the ensuing Parliament, in respect that the returning officers ought not to have received or admitted any votes for the person assuming the title of Errol, and that for this, and other reasons to be assigned at the proper time and place, my name ought to have been included in the return as duly elected one of the sixteen.

(Signed) LAUDERDALE.

ARCHBISHOPS and BISHOPS, 26.

Dr. John Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury
 Dr. William Markham, Archbishop of York
 Dr. Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London
 Hon. Dr. Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham
 Hon. Dr. Brownlow North, Bishop of Winchester
 Sir William Ashburnham, Bart. Bishop of Chichester
 Dr. Charles Moss, Bishop of Bath and Wells
 Hon. Dr. James Yorke, Bishop of Ely
 Dr. Richard Hurd, Bishop of Worcester
 Dr. John Butler, Bishop of Hereford
 Dr. John Warren, Bishop of Bangor
 Hon. Dr. James Cornwallis, Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry
 Dr. Lewis Bagot, Bishop of St. Asaph
 Dr. Richard Watson, Bishop of Landaff
 Dr. Edward Smallwell, Bishop of Oxford
 Dr. George Prettyman, Bishop of Lincoln
 Dr. John Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury
 Dr. William Cleaver, Bishop of Chester
 Dr. Samuel Horsley, Bishop of Rochester
 Dr. Richard Beadon, Bishop of Gloucester
 Hon. Dr. Edward Venables Vernon, Bishop of Carlisle
 Dr. Charles Manners Sutton, Bishop of Norwich
 Dr. Spencer Madan, Bishop of Peterborough
 Dr. William Buller, Bishop of Exeter
 Hon. Dr. William Stuart, Bishop of St. David's
 Dr. Henry Reginald Courtenay, Bishop of Bristol.

SUMMARY of the HOUSE of PEERS, September 27, 1796.

Peers of the Blood Royal	- - -	4
Dukes	- - - - -	19
Marquisses	- - - - -	11
Earls	- - - - -	88
Viscounts	- - - - -	14
Barons	- - - - -	110
Scots Peers	- - - - -	16
Archbishops and Bishops	- -	26
		<hr/>
		288
Peereffes in their own right	-	10
		<hr/>
		298
		<hr/>

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

SPEAKER, Right Honourable HENRY ADDINGTON.

Abingdon, Berkshire.

T. T. Metcalfe, esq.

Agmondesham, Bucks.

Thomas Drake Tyrwhitt, esq.

Charles Drake Gerrard, esq.

St. Alban's, Hertfordshire.

Lord Bingham.

T. S. D. Bucknall, esq.

Aldborough, Suffolk.

Sir John Aubrey, bart.

M. A. Taylor, esq.

Aldborough, Yorkshire.

R. Muilm. Trench Chiswell, esq.

Charles Duncombe, jun. esq.

Andover, Hants.

Benjamin Lethicullier, esq.

Hon. Coulson Wallop

Anglesea.

Hon. Arthur Paget

Appleby, Westmoreland.

John Courtenay, esq.

Hon. John Tufton

Arunael, Sussex.

Sir George Thomas, bart.

James Greene, esq.

Ashburton, Devonshire.

Sir Robert Mackreth, knight

Lawrence Palk, esq.

Aylesbury, Bucks.

Scrope Bernard, esq.

Gerard Lake, esq.

Banbury, Oxfordshire.

Dudley North, esq.

Barnstaple, Devonshire.

John Cleveland, esq.

Richard Wilson, esq.

Bath, City of.

Viscount Weymouth

Sir Richard Pepper Arden, knight

Beaumaris, Town of.

Lord Newborough

Bedfordshire.

Hon. St-Andrew St-John

John Osborn, esq.

Bedford, Town of.

William Colhoun, esq.

Samuel Whitbread, esq.

Bedwin, Wilts.

Hon. Thomas Bruce

John Wodehouse, esq.

Beeralston, Devonshire.

Sir John Mitford, knight

William Mitford, esq.

Berkshire.

George Vansittart, esq.

Charles Dundas, esq.

Berwick, Northumberland.

Earl of Tyrconnel

John Callander, esq.

Beverley, Yorkshire.

William Tatton, esq.

N. C. Burton, esq.

Bewdley, Worcestershire.

M. P. Andrews, esq.

Bishop's Castle, Shropshire.

William Clive, esq.

Henry Strachey, esq.

Blechingly, Surry.

Sir Lionel Copley, bart.

John Stein, esq.

Bodmyn, Cornwall.

Sir John Morhead, bart.

John Nesbitt, esq.

Boroughbridge, Yorkshire.

Sir John Scott

Francis Burdett, esq.

*Bossiney, Cornwall.*Hon. James Archibald Stuart-
Wortley

J. Lubbock, esq.

Boston, Lincolnshire.

Thomas Fydell, esq.

Viscount Milfordtown

Brackley, Northamptonshire.

John William Egerton, esq.

Samuel Haynes, esq.

Bramber, Sussex.

James Adams, esq.

Sir C. W. Rouse Boughton, bart.

Brecon, County of.

Sir Charles Morgan, bart.

Brecon, Town of.

Charles Morgan, esq.

Bridgnorth, Shropshire.

Isaac Hawkins Browne, esq.

J. Whitmore, esq.

Bridgewater, Somersetshire.

George Pocock, esq.

Jefferys Allen, esq.

Bridport, Dorsetshire.

Charles Sturt, esq.

George Barclay, esq.

Bristol, City of.

Lord Sheffield

Charles Bragge, esq.

Buckinghamshire.

Marquis of Titchfield

Right Hon. James Grenville

Buckingham, Town of.

George Nugent, esq.

Thomas Grenville, esq.

Callington, Cornwall.

Sir John Call, bart.

Paul Orchard, esq.

Calne, Wiltshire.

Joseph Jekyll, esq.

Sir Francis Baring, bart.

Cambridgeshire.

James Warwood Adcane, esq.

Charles Yorke, esq.

Cambridge University.

Right Hon. William Pitt

Earl of Euston

Cambridge, Town of.

Robert Manners, esq.

Hon. Edward Finch

Camelford, Cornwall.

W. J. Denison, esq.

J. Angerstein, esq.

Canterbury, City of.

J. Baker, esq.

S. E. Sawbridge, esq.

Cardiff, Town of.

Lord James Evelyn Stuart

Cardiganshire.

Thomas Johnes, esq.

Cardigan, Town of.

Hon. John Vaughan

Carlisle, City of.

John Christian Curwen, esq.
Sir F. Vane, bart.

Carmarthenshire.

Sir James Hamlyn, bart.

Carmarthen, Town of.

M. D. Magens, esq.

Carnarvonshire.

Sir Robert Williams, bart.

Carnarvon, Town of.

Hon. Edward Paget

Castle-Rising, Norfolk.

Horatio Churchill, esq.
Charles Chester, esq.

Chester.

John Crewe, esq.
Thomas Cholmondeley, esq.

Chester, City of.

Thomas Grosvenor, esq.
Viscount Belgrave

Chichester, City of.

Right Hon. Thomas Steele
George White Thomas, esq.

Chippenham, Wilts.

James Dawkins, esq.
George Fludyer, esq.

Christchurch, Hampshire.

George Rose, esq.
W. Stewart Rose, esq.

Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

Robert Preston, esq.
Michael Hicks Beach, esq.

Clitheroe, Lancashire.

Lord E. C. Cavendish Bentick
Hon. Robert Curzon

Cockermouth, Cumberland.

John Baynes Garforth, esq.
Edward Burrow, esq.

Colchester, Essex.

Robert Thornton, esq.
Lord Muncaster

Corff-Castle, Dorsetshire.

John Bond, esq.
Henry Bankes, esq.

Cornwall, County of.

Sir William Lemon, bart.
Francis Gregor, esq.

Coventry, Warwickshire.

W. Wilberforce Bird, esq.
Nathaniel Jefferys, esq.

Cricklade, Wiltshire.

Thomas Estcourt, esq.
Lord Porchester

Cumberland.

Sir Henry Fletcher, bart.
John Lowther, esq.

Dartmouth, Devonshire.

Edmund Bastard, esq.
Right Hon. John Charles Villiers

Denbighshire.

Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, bt.

Denbigh, Town of.

Richard Myddelton, esq.

Derbyshire.

Right Hon. Lord John Cavendish
Edward Miller Mundy, esq.

Derby, Town of.

Right Hon. Lord George Aug.
Henry Cavendish
Edward Coke, esq.

Devizes, Wiltshire.

Right Hon. Henry Addington,
speaker of the H. of Commons
Joshua Smith, esq.

Devonshire.

Lawrence Palk, esq.
John Pollexfen Bastard, esq.

Dorsetshire.

Francis-John Browne, esq.
William Morton Pitt, esq.

Dorchester, Dorsetshire.

Francis Fane, esq.
Hon. Cropley Ashley

Dover, Kent.

John Trevanion, esq.
Charles Small Pybus, esq.

Downton, Wiltshire.

Hon. Edward Bouverie
Sir William Scott, knight

Droitwich, Worcestershire.

Hon. Andrew Foley
Sir Edward Winnington, bart.

Dunwich, Suffolk.

Snowdon Barne, esq.
Sir Joshua Vanneck, bart.

Durham, County of.

Rowland Burdon, esq.
Ralph Milbanke, esq.

Durham, City of.

William-Henry Lambton, esq.
Sir Henry-Vane Tempest, bart.

East-Looe, Cornwall.

John Buller, esq.
William Graves, esq.

St. Edmonsbury, Suffolk.

Sir Charles Davers, bart.
Lord Hervey

Essex, County of.

Thomas Berney Bramston, esq.
John Bullock, esq.

Evesham, Worcestershire.

Thomas Thompson, esq.
Charles Thellusson, esq.

Exeter, City of.

John Baring, esq.
Sir C. W. Bampfylde, bart.

Eye, Suffolk.

Hon. William Cornwallis
Mark Singleton, esq.

Flintshire.

Sir Roger Mostyn, bt. (since dead)

Flint, Town of.

Watkin Williams, esq.

Fowey, Cornwall.

Philip Rashleigh, esq.
Reginald Pole Carew, esq.

Gatton, Surrey.

John Petrie, esq.
Sir Gilbert Heathcote, bart.

St. Germain's, Cornwall.

Hon. William Eliot
Lord Grey

Glamorganshire.

Thomas Wyndham, esq.

Gloucestershire.

Hon. George Cranfield Berkeley
Marquis of Worcester

Gloucester, City of.

John Pitt, esq.
Henry Howard, esq.

Grampound, Cornwall.

Bryan Edwards, esq.
Robert Sewell, esq.

Grantham, Lincolnshire.

George Sutton, esq.
Simon Yorke, esq.

Great Grimsby, Lincolnshire.

Ascough Boucherett, esq.
William Mellish, esq.

East Grinstead, Sussex.

Nathaniel Dance, esq.
James Strange, esq.

Guildford, Surry.

Hon. Thomas Onslow
Hon. Chapple Norton

Hampshire.

Sir William Heathcote, bart.
William Chute, esq.

Harwich, Essex.

John Robinson, esq.
Richard Hopkins, esq.

Haslemere, Surrey.

James-Clarke Satterthwaite, esq.
James Lowther, esq.

Haslings, Sussex.

Sir James Sanderson
Nicholas Vansittart, esq.

Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire.

Lord Kensington

Helston, Cornwall.

Charles Abbot, esq.
Richard Richards, esq.

Herefordshire.

Right Hon. Thomas Harley
Robert Biddulph, esq.

Hereford, City of.

John Scudamore, esq. (since dead)
James Walwyn, esq.

Hertfordshire.

W. Plumer, esq.
William Baker, esq.

Hartford, Town of.

John Calvert, esq.
Nathaniel Dimsdale, esq.

Heydon, Yorkshire.

Sir Lionel Darell, bart.
Christopher Atkinson, esq.

Heytesbury, Wilts.

Viscount Clifden
Sir J. F. Leicester, bart.

Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire.

James Adair, esq.

Hindon, Wilts.

James Wildman, esq.
M. G. Lewis, esq.

Honiton, Devonshire.

George Chambers, esq.
George Shum, esq.

Horsbam, Sussex.

Sir John Macpherson, bart.
James Fox, esq.

Huntingdonshire.

Viscount Hinchbrook
Lord Frederick Montague

Huntingdon, Town of.

W. H. Fellowes, esq.
John Calvert, jun. esq.

Hythe, Kent.

Sir C. Farnaby Radcliffe, bart.
William Evelyn, esq.

Ilchester, Somersetshire.

Sir Robert Clayton, bart.
William Dickenson, jun. esq.

Ipswich, Suffolk.

Charles-Alexander Crickitt, esq.
Sir Andrew-Snape Hammond, bt.

St. Ives, Cornwall.

William Praed, esq.
Sir R. Carr Glynn, knight

Kent.

Sir Edward Knatchbull, bart.
Sir William Geary, bart.

King's Lynn, Norfolk.

Hon. Horatio Walpole
Sir Martin-Browne Folkes, bart.

Kingston-upon-Hull, Yorksbire.

Samuel Thornton, esq.
Sir Charles Turner, bart.

Knareborough, Yorksbire.

James Hare, esq.
Rt. Hon. Lord John Townshend

Lancashire.

Thomas Stanley, esq.
John Blackburne, esq.

Lancaster, Town of.

John Dent, esq.
Richard Penn, esq.

Launceston, Cornwall.

Hon. John Rawdon
James Brogden, esq.

Leicestershire.

William Pochin, esq.
Hon. Penn-Asheton Curzon

Leicester, Town of.

Lord Randiffe
Samuel Smith, esq.

Leominster, Herefordshire.

John Hunter, esq.
G. A. Pollen, esq.

Leskeard, Cornwall.

Hon. Edward-James Eliot
Hon. John Eliot

Lestwithiel, Cornwall.

Hans Sloane, esq.
William Drummond, esq.

Lewes, Sussex.

Hon. J. C. Pelham
Thomas Kemp, esq.

Lincolnshire.

Robert Vyner, jun. esq.
Sir Gilbert Heathcote, bart.

Lincoln, City of.

Hon. George Rawdon
Richard Ellison, esq.

Litchfield, City of.

Thomas Anson, esq.
Rt. Hon. Lord Granville-Leve-
son Gower

Liverpool, Lancashire.

Isaac Gascoyne, esq.
Banastre Tarleton, esq.

LONDON.

William Curtis, esq.
John William Anderson, esq.
William Lushington, esq.
H. C. Combe, esq.

Ludlow, Shropshire.

Richard-Payne Knight, esq.
Hon. Robert Cliye

Luggerball, Wiltshire.

Earl of Dalkeith
Robert Everett, esq.

Lyme Regis, Dorsetshire.

Hon. Henry Fane
Hon. Thomas Fane

Lymington, Hants.

Sir Harry-Burrard Neale, bart.
William Manning, esq.

Maidstone, Kent.

Matthew Bloxam, esq.
Oliver De Lancey, esq.

Malden, Essex.

Joseph Holden Strutt, esq.
Charles Callis Western, esq.

Malmesbury, Wilts.

P. J. Thellusson, esq.
S. Smith, esq.

Malton, Yorksbire.

Viscount Milton
William Baldwin, esq.

Marlborough, Wilts.

Hon. James Bruce
Lord Bruce

Marlow, Bucks.

Thomas Williams, esq.
Owen Williams, esq.

St. Maw's, Cornwall.

Sir William Young, bart.
George Nugent, esq.

St. Michael, Cornwall.

Sir Christopher Hawkins, bart.
Sir S. Lushington, bart.

Merionethsbire.

Sir Rob. Williams Vaughan, bt.

Midhurst, Sussex.

Right Hon. Sylvester Douglas
Charles Long, esq.

Middlesex.

William Mainwaring, esq.
George Byng, esq.

Milbourne-Port, Somersetsbire.

Lord Paget
Sir R. Ainslie, bart.

Minchhead, Somersetsbire.

John Fownes Luttrell, esq.
John Langston, esq.

Monmouthsbire.

James Rooke, esq.
Charles Morgan, esq.

Monmouth, Town of.

Charles Thompson, esq.

Montgomerysbire.

Francis Lloyd, esq.

Montgomery, Town of.

Whitshed Keene, esq.

Morpeth, Northumberland.

Viscount Morpeth
William Huskisson, esq.

Newark, Nottinghamsbire.

John Manners Sutton, esq.
Mark Wood, esq.

Newcastle under Line, Staffordsbire.

William Egerton, esq.
E. Wilbraham Bootle, esq.

Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland

Sir Matthew White Ridley, bt.
Charles Brandling, esq.

Newport, Cornwall.

William Northey, esq.
Joseph Richardson, esq.

Newport, Hants.

J. C. Jervoise, esq.
E. Rushworth, esq.

Newton, Lancasbire.

Thomas-Peter Legh, esq.
Thomas Brooke, esq.

Newton, Hants.

Sir Richard Worsley, bart.
C. Shaw Le Fevre, esq.

Norfolk.

Sir John Wodehouse, bart.
Thomas-William Coke, esq.

Northallerton, Yorksbire.

Henry Peirse, esq.
Hon. Edward Lascelles

Northamptonshire.

Thomas Powys, esq.
Francis Dickins, esq.

Northampton, Town of.

Hon. Edward Bouverie
Hon. Spencer Percival

Northumberland.

Charles Grey, esq.
Thomas-Richard Beaumont, esq.

Norwich, City of.

Right Hon. William Windham
Hon. Henry Hobart

Nottinghamshire.

Lord Wm. Cavendish Bentick
Hon. Evelyn Pierrepont

Nottingham, Town of.

Lord Carrington
Daniel Parker Coke, esq.

Oakhampton, Devonshire.

Thomas Tyrwhitt, esq.
Bateman Robson, esq.

Orford, Suffolk.

Lord Robert Seymour
Hon. Robert Stewart

Oxfordshire.

Lord Charles Spencer
John Fane, esq.

Oxford, City of.

Francis Burton, esq.
Henry Peters, esq.

Oxford, University of.

Sir William Dolben, bart.
Francis Page, esq.

Pembrokeshire.

Lord Milford

Pembroke, Town of.

Hugh Barlow, esq.

Penryn, Cornwall.

Thomas Wallace, esq.
William Meeke, esq.

Peterborough, City of.

Hon. Lionel Damer
Richard Benyon, esq. (since dead)

Petersfield, Hants.

William Jolliffe, esq.
Hilton Jolliffe, esq.

Plymouth, Devonshire.

Sir Frederic Leman Rogers, bt.
William Elford, esq.

Plympton, Devonshire.

William Adams, esq.
William Mitchell, esq.

Pontefract, Yorksbire.

John Smyth, esq.
Viscount Galway

Poole, Dorsetshire.

Hon. C. Stuart
J. Jeffery, esq.

Portsmouth, Hants.

Hon. Thomas Erskine
Lord Hugh Seymour

Preston, Lancashire.

Sir Henry Philip Hoghton, bart.
Lord Stanley

Queensborough, Kent.

John Sargent, esq.
Evan Nepean, esq.

Radnor, County of.

Walter Wilkins, esq.

New Radnor.

Viscount Malden

Reading, Berkshire.

Francis Annesley, esq.
Richard Aldworth Neville, esq.

East-Retford, Notts.

William Petrie, esq.
Sir Wharton Amcotts, bart.

Richmond, Yorkshire.

Hon. Laurence Dundas
C. G. Beauclerk, esq.

Ripon, Yorkshire.

William Lawrence, esq.
Sir George Allanson Winn, bt.

Rocheſter, Kent.

Sir Richard King, bart.
Hon. Henry Tufton

New Romney, Kent.

John Fordyce, esq.
John Willett Willett, esq.

Rutlandſhire.

Gerard Noel Edwards, esq.
Sir William Lowther, bart.

Rye, Suffex.

Lord Hawkeſbury
Robert Dundas, esq.

Ryegate, Surry.

Hon. John Somers Cocks
Joſeph Sidney Yorke, esq.

Salop, or Shropſhire.

Sir Richard Hill, bart.
John Kynaſton, esq.

Saltaſh, Cornwall.

Edward Bearcroft, esq.
Lord Macdonald

Sandwich, Kent.

Sir Philip Stephens, bart.
Sir Horace Mann, bart.

New Sarum, Wilts.

William Huſſey, esq.
Hon. William-Henry Bouverie

Old Sarum, Wilts.

George Hardinge, esq.
Earl of Mornington

Scarborough, Yorkſhire.

Hon. Edmund Phipps
Lord Charles-Henry Somerſet

Seaſord, Suffex.

Charles-Roſe Ellis, esq.
George Ellis, esq.

Shaſtbury, Dorſetſhire.

Paul Benfield, esq.
Walter Boyd, esq.

Shoreham, Suffex.

Hon. C. William Wyndham
Sir Cecil Biſhop, bart.

Shrewſbury.

Sir William Pulteney, bart.
Hon. William Hill

Somerſetſhire.

William Gore Langton, esq.
William Dickinson, esq.

Southampton, Town of.

James Amyatt, esq.
George-Henry Roſe, esq.

Southwark, Borough of.

Henry Thornton, esq.
G. W. Thelluſſon, esq.

Staffordshire.

Earl Gower
Sir Edward Littleton, bart.

Stafford, Town of.

Hon. Edward Monckton
Richard-Brinsley Sheridan, esq.

Stamford, Lincolnshire.

R. H. Sir George Howard, K. B.
(since dead)
Earl of Carysfort

Steyning, Sussex.

John Henniker Major, esq.
J. M. Lloyd, esq.

Stockbridge, Hampshire.

Joseph Foster Barham
George Porter, esq.

Sudbury, Suffolk.

William Smith, esq.
Sir James Marriott, bart.

Suffolk.

Sir C. Thomas Bunbury, bart.
Viscount Brome

Surry.

R. Hon. Lord William Russell
Sir John Frederick, bart.

Sussex.

Right Hon. Thomas Pelham
Charles Lenox, esq.

Tamworth, Staffordshire.

Robert Peel, esq.
Thomas Carter, esq.

Tavistock, Devonshire.

Right Hon. Richard Fitzpatrick
Lord John Russell

Taunton, Somersetshire.

William Morland, esq.
Sir Benjamin Hammet, knight

Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.

James Martin, esq.
William Dowdeswell, esq.

Thetford, Norfolk.

Joseph-Randyll Burch, esq.
John Harrison, esq.

Thirsk, Yorkshire.

Sir Gregory-Page Turner, bart.
Sir Thomas Frankland, bart.

Tiverton, Devonshire.

Right Hon. Dudley Ryder
Hon. Richard Ryder

Totness, Devonshire.

Lord George Seymour
Lord Arden

Tregony, Cornwall.

Sir Lionel Copley, bart.
John Nicholls, esq.

Truro, Cornwall.

John-Levison Gower, esq.
John Lemon, esq.

Wallingford, Berkshire.

Sir Francis Sykes, bart.
Lord Eardley

Wareham, Dorsetshire.

Lord Robert Spencer
Charles Ellis, esq.

Warwickshire.

Sir George-Augustus-William
Shuckburgh-Evelyn, bart.
Sir John Mordaunt, bart.

Warwick, Town of.

Hon. George Villiers
S. R. Gaussen, esq.

Wells, City of.

Clement Tudway, esq.
C. W. Taylor, esq.

Wendover, Bucks.

J. H. Addington, esq.
George Canning, esq.

Wenlock, Shropshire.

Cecil Forester, esq.
Hon. John Simpson

Weobly, Herefordshire.

Lord George Thynne
Lord John Thynne

Westbury, Wiltshire.

Sir H. P. St. John Mildmay, bt.
George Ellis, esq.

West Looe, Cornwall.

John Buller, esq.
Sitwell Sitwell, esq.

Westminster, City of.

Right Hon. Charles-James Fox
Sir Alan Gardner, bart.

Westmoreland.

Sir Michael Le Fleming, bart.
James Lowther, esq.

Weymouth and Melcombe Regis.

Sir James Pulteney, bart.
Andrew Stuart, esq.
Gabriel-Tucker Steward, esq.
William Garthshore, esq.

Whitchurch, Hampshire.

Hon. John-Thomas Townshend
Hon. William Brodrick

Wigan, Lancashire.

John Cotes, esq.
Hon. Orlando Bridgeman

Wilton, Wiltshire.

Viscount Fitzwilliam
Philip Goldsworthy, esq.

Wiltshire.

Ambrose Goddard, esq.
H. Penruddock Wyndham, esq.

Winchelsea, Sussex.

Richard Barwell, esq.
William Currie, esq.

Winchester, City of.

Sir Richard Gamon, bart.
Viscount Palmerston

Windsor, Berkshire.

Hon. Robert-Fulke Greville
H. Isherwood, esq.

Woodstock, Oxfordshire.

Sir H. Watkin Dashwood, bart.
Lord Lavington

Worcestershire.

Hon. Edward Foley
William Lygon, esq.

Worcester, City of.

Edmund Wigley, esq.
Abraham Robarts, esq.

Wootton-Bassett, Wiltshire.

John Dennison, esq.
Edward Clarke, esq.

Chipping-Wycombe, Buckinghamshire.

Earl of Wycombe
Sir John-Dashwood King, bart.

Tarmouth, Norfolk.

Stephens Howe, esq.
Ld. C. Townshend (since dead)

Tarmouth, Hampshire.

Jervoise-Clerke Jervoise, esq.
Edward Rushworth, esq.

Yorkshire.

William Wilberforce, esq.
Hon. Henry Lascelles

York, City of.

Richard-Slater Milnes, esq.
Sir W. Mordaunt Milner, bart.

SCOTLAND, 45.

Aberdeenshire.

James Ferguson, esq.

Airshire.

Hugh Montgomery, esq.

Argyllshire.

Lord Frederic Campbell

Banffshire.

William Grant, esq.

Berwickshire.

George Baillie, jun. esq.

County of Caithness.

Hon. Frederick Stuart

County of Cromarty.

Hon. Frederick Campbell

Dumbartonshire.

W. C. Bontine, esq.

Dumfrieshire.

Sir Robert Laurie, bart.

Edinburghshire.

Robert Dundas, esq.

Elginshire.

James Brodie, esq.

Fifehire.

Sir William Erskine, bart.

Forfarshire.

Sir David Carnegie, bart.

Haddingtonshire.

Hew Hamilton Dalrymple, esq.

Invernesshire.

Simon Fraser, jun. esq.

Kincardineshire.

Robert Barclay, esq. (Ury in this county)

Kinrosshire.

Sir Ralph Abercrombie, K. B.

Kirkcudbright Stewartry.

Patric Heron, esq.

Lanerkshire.

Sir James Stuart Denham, bart.

Lindithgowshire.

Hon. John Hope

Orkney and Zetlandshire.

Robert Honeyman, esq.

Peebleshire.

William Montgomery, esq.

Perthshire.

Thomas Graham, esq.

Renfrewshire.

Boyd Alexander, esq.

Rossshire.

Sir Charles Ross, bart.

Roxburghshire.

Sir George Douglas, bart.

Selkirkshire.

Mark Pringle, esq.

*Stirlingshire.*Hon. Sir G. Keith Elphinstone,
K. B.*Sutherlandshire.*

James Grant, esq.

Wigtownshire.

Hon. William Stewart

ROYAL BOROUGHES.

Edinburgh City.

Right Hon. Henry Dundas

*Tain, Dingwall, Dornock, Wick, and
Kirkwall.*

William Dundas, esq.

*Fortrose, Inverness, Nairn, and
Forres.*

Sir Hector Monro, K. B.

*Elgin, Banff, Cullen, Kintore, and
Inverrourie.*

Alexander Brodie, esq.

*Aberdeen, Aberbrothock, Montrose,
Brechin, and Inverbervie.*

Alexander Allardyce, esq.

*Perth, Dundee, St. Andrews, For-
far, and Cupar.*

David Scott, esq.

*Anstruther East and West, Pittenween,
Crail, and Kilrenny.*

John Anstruther, esq.

*Dysart, Kirkaldy, Bruntisland, and
Kinghorn.*

Sir James St. Clair Erskine, bt.

*Stirling, Innerkithen, Dumfarnlin,
Queensferry, and Culross.*

Hon. And. Cochrane Johnstone

*Glasgow, Dumbarton, Renfrew, and
Ruthlergen.*

William Macdowall, esq.

*Jedburgh, Haddington, Dunbar,
North Berwick, and Lauder.*

Robert Baird, esq.

*Peebles, Lanerk, Linlithgow, and
Selkirk.*

Viscount Stopford

*Dumfries, Sanquhar, Kirkcudbright,
Lockmaben, and Annan.*

Hon. Alexander Hope

*Wigtown, Whitehaven, New Gal-
loway, and Stranraer.*

John Spalding, esq.

*Ayre, Irvine, Rothsay, Inverary, and
Cambletown.*

John Campbell, esq.

England and Wales	-	-	-	513
Scotland	-	-	-	45
				<hr/>
				558
				<hr/>

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 27th September.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, that His Majesty not thinking fit to be personally present here this day, had been pleased to cause a Commission to be issued under the Great Seal, in order to the opening and holding of this Parliament.

Then three of the Lords Commissioners being seated on a form, placed between the Throne and the Woolfack, the Lord Chancellor in the middle, with the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury on his right hand, and the Lord President on his left, commanded the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod to let the Commons know the Lords Commissioners desire their immediate attendance in this House, to hear the Commission read; who being come,

The Lord Chancellor said,

“ My Lords, and Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

“ His Majesty, not thinking fit to be present here this day in
 “ His Royal Person, has been pleased, in order to the opening and
 “ holding of this Parliament, to cause letters patent to be passed
 “ under His Great Seal, constituting us, and several other Lords
 “ therein named, his Commissioners to do all things in His Ma-
 “ jesty's name, on his part necessary to be performed in this par-
 “ liament. This will more fully appear by the letters patent
 “ themselves, which must now be read.”

Then the said letters patent were read by the clerk: which done,
 The Lord Chancellor said,

“ My Lords, and Gentlemen,

“ We have it in command from His Majesty to let you know,
 “ that His Majesty will, as soon as the Members of both Houses
 “ shall be sworn, in person declare to you the causes of his call-
 “ ing this Parliament; and it being necessary a Speaker of the House
 “ of Commons should be first chosen, it is His Majesty's pleasure
 “ that you, Gentlemen of the House of Commons, repair to the
 “ place where you are to sit, and there to proceed to the choice of
 “ some proper person to be your Speaker, and that you present
 “ such person, whom you shall so choose, here to-morrow at twelve
 “ o'clock, for His Majesty's Royal Approbation.”

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The Lord High Steward (Duke of Dorset) attended to swear in such Members as were in their place.

In consequence of a message from the Lords, by the Usher of the Black Rod, the Members that were sworn in, proceeded to the

Upper House in order to hear His Majesty's Commission read for the opening of Parliament. After their return to their own House, the first business of the Commons was to choose a Speaker.

Lord F. CAMPBELL rose and said,

MR. HATSELL,

In obedience to His Majesty's commands, and in the exercise of the antient and undoubted right of this House—we are now assembled for the purpose of electing a fit person to sit in that chair, and to be our Speaker—that is, to establish order, regularity, temper, dispatch, and of course, effect, in all our proceedings; and this at a time when the very being of this country, and the quiet perhaps of all Europe, depend upon the wisdom and the result of our deliberations.

In looking round this House, we see many men of great abilities, splendid talents, greater abilities than perhaps ever adorned this or any other country. Some there are, who to great abilities have added great industry in searching out the grounds and principles upon which the orders of this House, and the law of Parliament have been so wisely framed—many we know have, and I trust all, in this parliament will look with a jealous eye to the rights and privileges of this House.

In an assembly so constituted, there cannot be wanting many persons who might fill that chair with credit to themselves and advantage to the public—but in this hour of difficulty and danger, we have no occasion to resort to conjecture—Experience is a safe unerring guide.

Fortunately for us, and the Commons of Great Britain whom we represent, there is a gentleman returned to this Parliament, who, year after year in that chair, has shewn that he is able to instruct the wisest, and ready to assist the weakest. Who in that chair has shewn a mind as independent as his fortune—Who in that chair has shewn a temper not to be ruffled;—a firmness not to be shaken—sure presages of rigid uniform impartiality—Who in that chair has watched over the rights and privileges of this House, as over the palladium of the liberties of our free Constitution, singularly free Constitution, where men may be at once true to Freedom and faithful to their King—who in that chair———but I will no longer press upon the delicate feelings of a truly great mind, but hasten to make that proposal, which with infinite satisfaction I perceive the whole House are impatient that I should make, which is, that the right honourable Henry Addington be called to the chair of this House to be our Speaker.

Mr. POWYS said, that he had never on any occasion risen with

such satisfaction as he did now, to second the motion of the noble Lord. To have such an opportunity of paying a tribute of just applause, could be no small gratification to all who entertained those sentiments of private friendship, and of public respect, which he had the happiness and honour of saying he did for the gentleman, who was the object of the motion. Yet it was not on the ground of personal attachment to that gentleman; it was not merely on the score of his many excellent, his distinguished qualities that he stood thus forward in his support; no; he rested on much higher grounds; he rested on the collective voice of the Commons of England; on the recorded testimony of the last Parliament, to whose memory, he trusted, he might pay a tribute of respect, and to whose judgement no objection would be urged in this respect by any Member who sat in the House—*Dignus imperare, nisi imperasset*, was the character given of a great Roman Emperor; that the reverse of that character was ever applicable to the right honourable gentleman, he did not mean to say; but if there were any, who, after his elevation, considered it as too sudden and premature, the voice of the House was completely justified by his conduct immediately after he had been called to the chair. The right honourable gentleman soon convinced the House that it was not on one splendid and brilliant display that he rested the reputation of his talents, but that he had attained a maturity of intellect which could command respect, and an extent of information that applied to every occasion. He had uniformly displayed an integrity the most unshaken, an understanding the most cultivated, a judgement the most enlightened, a knowledge the most comprehensive; in the execution of his office, an acquaintance not merely with the rules and forms of this House, but with the Constitution of Parliament. In all his behaviour he had displayed the utmost impartiality; in explaining difficulties he had ever been clear and satisfactory. He could not help calling to the recollection of those who had sat in the last Parliament, the leading points of that right honourable gentleman's discharge of his important office, his attention and assiduity, his zeal for the honour of the House, and his support of decorum and dignity. They would recollect too how much the House was indebted to him for his conduct in a recent instance, in a matter not within the ordinary duties which that situation imposed. He would not enumerate the particular occasions on which the right honourable gentleman had supported the dignity of the Chair and the honour of the House, and the different qualities by which he was recommended to their choice. But if he had maintained the dignity of the House as high as it had ever been carried by the most revered of his predecessors—if in

— that we he had endeavoured to suppress the freedom of opinion
— that he had never evinced partiality in the exercise of his functions
— that his carriage had been calculated to impress the highest respect
upon every mind—if his remarks had gained the esteem and con-
sideration they deserved even of those who, unfortunately, were little
disposed to agree upon other matters, he would not be thought too
frivolous in his hopes of the success of the noble Lord's motion,
which he had the honour to second.

It was not however the motion of the noble Lord; it was not
the weight of that Lord's character, great as it deservedly was; it
was not his own humble exertions that could influence the decision of
the House; the noble Lord and himself were but the instruments of
bringing forward a proposition which, he already perceived, met
with the general approbation of all parties. In that approbation,
and in the cordial assent with which the right honourable Henry
Barnardiston would be called to the chair, the voice of the mover
of the resolution would be lost.

The noble BARNARDISTON said, he cheerfully subscribed to every
statement uttered by the noble Lord who made the mo-
tion, and in some points he coincided with the honourable gentle-

man. But though he differed materially with
him on his ob-
ject, he did not think it would occur of

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gratifying to

his mind, if consistently with that respect which he owed the House, he could suffer the motion to pass without any observation. He could not be supposed to be deficient in gratitude to the noble mover, and the honourable seconder, for their public declarations, and for that confidence and esteem which had long been to him the source of pride and satisfaction in the intercourses of private life; neither could he be insensible to the liberal manner in which the motion had been supported by the honourable General; least of all could he be supposed to be wanting in respect to the House and to the Office, which he considered to be not less honourable, nor less important than any that could be filled by a subject. What indeed could be more honourable than an office conferred by the people, through the medium of their representatives; what more important than an office, whose duties, if well discharged, conferred honour on that branch of the Legislature more immediately connected with the people. But the arduous office required a great combination of talents, a combination rarely to be met with; were he to enumerate them, he was sure that the detail would present very serious obstacles to the passing of the present motion.—When he looked to the situation and to the nature of it, he felt a deep anxiety, not solely on his own account, but on account of the House itself. The noble Lord and the honourable gentleman had been pleased to allude to his former conduct; to that conduct it was impossible for him to advert, without the most grateful recollections. Since the experience of last Parliament had been mentioned, he could not omit this opportunity of expressing his sense of the indulgence he had received from it, and of the need which he had of that indulgence. On entering upon the office which he had then the honour to hold, he brought with him a firm attachment to the Constitution of the country, without which no man was worthy to be a member of that House, and he was free to say, that he had never intentionally swerved from that integrity which it was so satisfactory, on recollection, to have preserved in any situation, nor from that independence which was so necessary in that distinguished situation to which he had been raised by the voice of that House. In the maintenance of its rules, and the dispatch of business, on which its character and dignity so much depended, he confessed himself infinitely indebted, not merely for the support which he had uniformly received in his official capacity, but also for that most gracious indulgence which he had frequently experienced, and for which he now returned his warmest acknowledgements to every individual without distinction. He would not detain the House any longer, but conclude with expressing his earnest wish that their decision, in which he should most

respectfully acquiesce, might be dictated by wisdom directed to the public benefit.

Mr. Addington was then called to the chair by the unanimous voice of the House, and when he had taken it, he returned his warmest thanks for the honour they had done him, the value of which, he said, was much enhanced by the way in which it was conferred.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS congratulated the Speaker upon the situation to which he was raised, and he at the same time congratulated the House and the public upon the office being filled by a person who was so eminently calculated to discharge its functions. As there was nothing which he could say which had not been anticipated by the public feeling, he would not dwell longer upon the subject, but would merely move the adjournment of the House.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 28th September.

Several Lords took the oaths.

Then three of the Lords Commissioners being in their robes, and seated as on the preceding day, commanded the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod to let the Commons know, that the Lords Commissioners desired their immediate attendance in the House of Lords :

Who being come, Mr. Addington said,

My Lords, His Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled, have, in pursuance of his Royal directions, and according to their undoubted rights, proceeded to the election of one of their Members to be their Speaker. Among so many of them, better qualified for this high and important trust, their choice has again fallen upon me.

His Majesty must, I am afraid, have observed so many imperfections in my conduct, during the last Parliament, that I need urge no other reasons to induce his Majesty to give his faithful Commons an opportunity of presenting one worthier of their choice, and His Majesty's Royal approbation.

Then the LORD CHANCELLOR said,

Mr. Addington, Your conduct, during the last Parliament, in that important trust to which you are now again called, hath given His Majesty the fullest and most convincing proof of your great knowledge, wisdom, and sufficiency. And His Majesty hath commanded us to let you know, that he entirely approves the choice which his Commons have made : and we do, by virtue of His

Majesty's commission, and in his name, allow and confirm you to be their Speaker.

Then Mr. SPEAKER said,

My Lords, It is my duty to resign myself, as I do, to His Majesty's determination; and to beseech His Majesty's acceptance of my most humble and dutiful acknowledgements for this fresh mark of his grace and favour. I have had such ample experience of His Majesty's goodness, that, for my encouragement in the execution of this great trust, I cannot doubt of His Majesty's making all just allowances for my failings, of his pardon for all my future involuntary errors, at least that they may not be imputed to his faithful Commons. That they may be the better enabled to do their duty to His Majesty and their country, I do, in their name, and on their behalf, by humble petition to His Majesty, lay claim to all their ancient rights and privileges; particularly that their persons, their estates, and servants, may be free from arrests, and all molestations; that they may enjoy liberty of speech in all their debates; may have access to His Majesty's royal person whenever occasion shall require; and that all their proceedings may receive from His Majesty the most favourable construction.

Then the LORD CHANCELLOR said—Mr. Speaker, We have it in command from the King to acquaint you, that His Majesty is fully persuaded of the prudence and temper of this House of Commons, as well as of their duty and loyalty.

And we do, by virtue of His Majesty's commission, and in his name, declare to you, that the King grants and allows to them all their privileges in as full and ample manner as they have at any time heretofore been granted or allowed by His Majesty, or any of his royal predecessors.

As to what concerns yourself, Sir, though His Majesty is convinced, that a person of your wisdom and discretion can never stand in need of that pardon which your modesty hath induced you to ask; yet His Majesty hath commanded us to assure you, that you may rely upon his gracious support and acceptance in your execution of this high and important charge; and that he will put the most favourable construction upon all your words and actions.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

A number of Members being met, and the Speaker having taken the chair, the Usher of the Black Rod came with a message from the House of Peers, commanding the Members of the honourable House of Commons to give their attendance, to present their Speaker for His Majesty's approbation. The Speaker, and all the

Members present went to the House of Lords accordingly ; and being returned, the Speaker addressed himself to the House from the chair in nearly the following words :

It is my duty to acquaint you, that this House has been in the House of Peers, where His Majesty, by commission, has been graciously pleased to approve of your choice in the appointment you have made of a Speaker, and to grant and allow the Members of this honourable House their petition and claim of all their ancient rights and privileges, in as full and ample a manner as they have been heretofore enjoyed by their predecessors. It is farther His Majesty's gracious pleasure that the persons, estates, and servants of Members of this House, shall be free from any arrest or molestation whatever ; and that they shall be allowed freedom of speech in their debates, as well as uncontrolled access to His Majesty's person.

It is now my duty to repeat to this House my most grateful and humble acknowledgements for the proof they have given me of this esteem ; in the choice they have made, it became me to acquiesce, and I have now only to express my earnest hope, that my conduct may always be such as shall prove the high sense I entertain of the obligation conferred on me. There may be many occasions when it will undoubtedly be necessary for me to rely on the indulgence of this House. That I shall receive that indulgence I have not a doubt. I rely on the exertions of the House in supporting its own dignity and privileges, by rendering me this uniform assistance in enforcing the strictest observance of the rules and orders of the House, on the due observance of which depends its very existence. This support I have heretofore amply received, and I trust I shall receive it in future.

It is now my duty to state, that the first proceedings of this House will be to administer the oaths required by act of Parliament to such of the Members as have not yet taken them.

The oaths were then administered to such Members as attended.

Thursday, September 29, and Friday, September 30.

The oaths were administered to such Members as had not previously been sworn.

Adjourned to Wednesday 5th October.

Wednesday, 5th October.

Several Members took the oaths.

Thursday, 6th October.

A MESSAGE from His Majesty was delivered by Sir Francis Molyneux, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod.

Mr. SPEAKER,

The King commands this honourable House to attend His Majesty immediately in the House of Peers.

Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, with the House, went up to attend His Majesty; and being returned,

A bill for the more effectual preventing Clandestine Outlawries was read the first time.

Resolved, That this bill be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker reported that the House had attended His Majesty in the House of Peers, where His Majesty was pleased to make a most gracious speech from the throne to both Houses of Parliament; of which, Mr. Speaker said, he had, to prevent mistakes, obtained a copy, which he read to the House, and is as follows; viz.

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

It is a peculiar satisfaction to me, in the present conjuncture of affairs, to recur to your advice, after the recent opportunity which has been given for collecting the sense of my people, engaged in a difficult and arduous contest, for the preservation of all that is most dear to us.

I have omitted no endeavours for setting on foot negotiations to restore peace to Europe, and to secure for the future the general tranquillity. The steps which I have taken for this purpose have at length opened the way to an immediate and direct negotiation, the issue of which must either produce the desirable end of a just, honourable, and solid peace for us, and for our allies, or must prove, beyond dispute, to what cause alone the prolongation of the calamities of war must be ascribed.

I shall immediately send a person to Paris with full powers to treat for this object, and it is my anxious wish that this measure may lead to the restoration of general peace: but you must be sensible that nothing can so much contribute to give effect to this desire, as your manifesting that we possess both the determination and the resources to oppose, with increased activity and energy, the farther efforts with which we may have to contend.

You will feel this peculiarly necessary at a moment when the enemy has openly manifested the intention of attempting a descent on these kingdoms.—It cannot be doubted what would be the issue of such an enterprise; but it befits your wisdom to neglect no precautions that may either preclude the attempt, or secure the speediest means of turning it to the confusion and ruin of the enemy.

In reviewing the events of the year, you will have observed that, by the skill and exertions of my navy, our extensive and increasing com-

merce has been protected to a degree almost beyond example, and the fleets of the enemy have for the greatest part of the year, been blocked up in their own ports.

The operations in the East and West Indies have been highly honourable to the British arms, and productive of great national advantage; and the valour and good conduct of my forces, both by sea and land, have been eminently conspicuous.

The fortune of war on the continent has been more various, and the progress of the French armies threatened, at one period, the utmost danger to all Europe; but from the honourable and dignified perseverance of my ally the Emperor, and from the intrepidity, discipline, and invincible spirit of the Austrian forces, under the auspicious conduct of the Archduke Charles, such a turn has lately been given to the course of the war, as may inspire a well-grounded confidence that the final result of the campaign will prove more disastrous to the enemy than its commencement and progress for a time were favourable to their hopes.

The apparently hostile dispositions and conduct of the Court of Madrid have led to discussions of which I am not yet enabled to acquaint you with the final result; but I am confident that whatever may be their issue, I shall have given to Europe a farther proof of my moderation and forbearance; and I can have no doubt of your determination to defend, against every aggression, the dignity, rights, and interests of the British empire.

Gentlemen of the House of Commons,

I rely on your zeal and public spirit for such supplies as you may think necessary for the service of the year. It is a great satisfaction to me to observe that, notwithstanding the temporary embarrassments which have been experienced, the state of the commerce, manufactures, and revenue of the country, proves the real extent and solidity of our resources, and furnishes you such means as must be equal to any exertions which the present crisis may require.

My Lords, and Gentlemen,

The distresses which were in the last year experienced from the scarcity of corn are now, by the blessing of God, happily removed, and an abundant harvest affords the pleasing prospect of relief in that important article to the labouring classes of the community.—Our internal tranquillity has also continued undisturbed—the general attachment of my people to the British Constitution has appeared on every occasion, and the endeavours of those who wished to introduce anarchy and confusion into this country, have been repressed by the energy and wisdom of the laws.

To defeat all the designs of our enemies, to restore to my people the blessings of a secure and honourable peace, to maintain inviolate their religion, laws, and liberty, and to deliver down unimpaired to the la-

rest posterity, the glory and happiness of these kingdoms, is the constant wish of my heart, and the uniform end of all my actions. In every measure that can conduce to these objects, I am confident of receiving the firm, zealous, and affectionate support of my parliament.

VISCOUNT MORPETH, (son of the Earl of Carlisle) rose to move the address. His Lordship said, as he was not in the habit of addressing that House, he hoped he should experience its indulgence on the present occasion. He felt however somewhat emboldened, from the consideration of the contents of the speech they had just heard, and which, he flattered himself, would meet the cordial approbation of the House. He considered it more peculiarly incumbent upon those who had the honour of a seat in that House, to come forward, as early as possible, to give their opinion upon public affairs. Under this impression he stood forward. He trusted that the sentiments avowed in His Majesty's speech, would tend to reconcile that variety and opposition of sentiment which had hitherto subsisted; for, whatever opinions gentlemen might have entertained with respect to the origin of the war, and the manner in which it had been conducted, it must assuredly give them satisfaction to concur in a motion which had for its object the expediting of an honourable peace. Those who thought that this was a war just and necessary in its commencement, and unavoidable in its continuance, must also rejoice that the period is arrived in which a negotiation may be entered into; that there existed in France a government of a stability and permanence that might with safety be treated with. They must all be happy that steps had been taken to enter into a negotiation, that a passport was arrived for a Minister from this country to proceed to Paris. He hoped that such negotiation would come to a favourable issue, but sanguine as he was in that hope, he did not wish that we should neglect to adopt those measures of activity that might tend to facilitate that object. He hoped also, that we should not neglect employing our resources to the utmost advantage, and that we should shew that while we are desirous for peace, we are nevertheless in a condition to continue the contest, and that, if necessary, we can redouble our efforts for the continuance of the war, by continuing if possible by increasing our exertions, we should be prepared whatever might be the issue of negotiation: if successful, the House would have the pride and satisfaction of having placed the country in that respectable state of defence, which enabled it to treat on just and honourable terms; if unsuccessful, we should have at least the consolation of having contributed as much as possible to the security and protection of the country, and having prepared it for that pain-

ful, though necessary, alternative, the continuation of an obstinate war. He was glad to observe, that if this painful alternative should become unavoidable, our resources would be adequate; and here he must observe, that the speech from the Throne was fully justified, fully as to the condition of our trade and commerce: they certainly were flourishing to a high degree, as was evinced by the produce of the duties upon our imports and exports, and by the general state of our revenue. It was a fact upon which reliance might be placed, that our exports for the last half year exceeded by two millions sterling the amount of the half year, which corresponded with it in the preceding year. This was a matter that must afford them the utmost satisfaction, since it incontrovertibly proved that the commerce of the country was progressively increasing, and its resources inexhausted. Let it be remembered also that our commercial prosperity has risen to such a pitch during a period of war, and amidst all the pressure with which it was accompanied. It was also a source of the highest exultation, that the naval character of the country stood upon as respectable a footing as it ever had done at any former period.—Great Britain still held the dominion of the sea, and the valour of our fleets and armies had obtained for us new and splendid acquisitions in the East Indies and the West. In Europe, it was true, the course of events had not been so gratifying, but of late they had much improved. Astonished and dismayed as they must have been at the successes of our enemies in the former part of the campaign, those successes had been effectually checked, and their dreaded consequences prevented by the bravery of our Austrian allies, and by the wise and heroic conduct of the Archduke Charles, who had defeated the gigantic projects, and rendered nugatory the boasted successes of our foes. With regard to the conduct of Spain, as there was nothing final upon that subject before the House, he thought it his duty to abstain from comments upon it. He believed, however, that, if the issue should be unfortunate, no blame would be fairly imputable to the administration of this country. As to our internal situation, we had witnessed it for some time past with joy and exultation, and had reason to congratulate His Majesty and the people at large upon our auspicious prospect in that respect. We had been favoured with an abundant harvest, and the greatest plenty was now secured to the people of these kingdoms. Viewing, as he did, the situation of our affairs in all respects, he thought he did not hope for too much when he hoped the House would support him in the motion with which he should have the honour of concluding, as he trusted it would be one step towards the attain-

ment of a peace that would be honourable to this nation. He concluded with moving :

“ That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, to return His Majesty the thanks of this House for his most gracious speech from the throne.

“ To assure His Majesty, that we are deeply sensible of His Majesty's parental regard for the interest of his subjects, in having omitted no endeavours for setting on foot negotiations to restore peace to Europe, and to secure for the future the general tranquillity.

“ That we rejoice to learn, that the steps which have been taken for this purpose have at length opened the way to an immediate and direct negotiation, which, we doubt not, will be so conducted on His Majesty's part, as either to produce the desirable end of a just, honourable, and solid peace for us and for our allies, or to prove, beyond dispute, to what cause alone the prolongation of the calamities of war must be ascribed.

“ That we join with His Majesty in an anxious wish, that the step which His Majesty proposes to take of sending a person to Paris, with full powers to treat, may lead to the restoration of general peace ; but we are fully sensible, that nothing can so much contribute to give effect to this desire as manifesting that we possess both the determination and the resources to oppose, with increased activity and energy, the farther efforts with which we may have to contend.

“ That we must, indeed, feel this to be peculiarly necessary when an intention has been openly manifested of attempting a descent on these kingdoms ; and that although it cannot be doubted what would be the issue of such an enterprize, we deem it an indispensable duty to neglect no precautions that may either preclude the attempt, or to secure the speediest means of turning it to the confusion and ruin of the enemy.

“ That in reviewing the events of the year we have not failed to observe, with a just satisfaction, that by the skill and exertions of His Majesty's navy our extensive and increasing commerce has been protected to a degree almost beyond example ; and that the fleets of the enemy have, for the greatest part of the year, been blocked up in their own ports.

“ We consider the operations in the East and West Indies as productive of great national advantage, and as displaying the valour and good conduct of His Majesty's forces, both by sea and land, in a degree highly honourable to the British arms.

“ That having contemplated, with anxious solicitude, the va-

last three years, namely, to open a negotiation; this, which is the leading feature of the speech, ought undoubtedly to reconcile me to the address which has been moved, and I should be happy if it contained no other features of a less pleasing aspect, and that I could have given my entire approbation to every part of the address. Of that striking feature I most cordially and highly approve. I cannot forget how often I have advised this measure, nor how often, without success, I have pressed it upon Ministers; but, however I may lament that the counsel was not taken before a hundred millions of money was spent, and thousands of lives devoted to the cruel contest, yet it must draw from me my warm approbation now that it hath been followed. He who thought that the war was originally unnecessary, and that every moment since its commencement was a proper moment for commencing a negotiation for peace, cannot object to the measure which His Majesty has announced that he has been advised to take in the present moment. I will not say one word about the particular and the fit time for such a measure, all times appearing to me to be equally wise and salutary for endeavouring to restore to the people the blessings of peace. Nor will I recollect, much less retaliate, the personal invectives that were thrown against myself; that an attempt to negotiate with such a people, was to lay His Majesty's crown at their feet, and that it was a degradation of the honour and dignity of Great Britain—that to propose to open a negotiation was in fact to sue for peace, and that such conduct was neither dignified nor political. Such was the language of the last Parliament, and such was the animadversion made on the advice which I then gave. I will content myself with repeating what I then said, that “to propose a negotiation is not to sue for peace.” It is at every moment dignified and proper to strive to restore the blessings of peace; and it is certainly one thing, to propose a negotiation in which terms are to be fairly and manfully discussed; and another, to sue to your enemy for peace. He who objects to this distinction is not animated by that feeling which ought ever to be uppermost in the mind of a statesman—an anxious desire of shortening the calamity of war, and of paving the way, by every practicable means, to that desirable end. He ought ever, therefore, to make it manifest in his conduct, that no career of conquest, and no reverse of fortune, can divert him from that single object—a negotiation for peace in preference to any other object. I repeat, therefore, that I most perfectly and entirely approve of the present measure, and shall not now mix my assent to that part of the address with any observation on the tardy and protracted manner in which it has been

at length resolved upon. And thus approving of the principal feature of the address, I am extremely unwilling to oppose any other part of it, and wish that it had been so worded as to have engaged the perfect unanimity of the whole House.—There are some expressions, however, of which I must take notice, and I shall do so rather with the intention of explaining the vote which I shall give, than of moving any thing upon them. And first, in the very opening of the speech there is an expression that His Majesty has “used every endeavour to open a negotiation;” now, unless by the words “every endeavour” it is meant to say that every endeavour has been used since the close of the last Parliament, we ought not to agree to the expression; for undoubtedly Ministers cannot expect that gentlemen who, like myself, objected so frequently to their refusal to exert any effort at all, should now acquiesce in an assertion that they had used every endeavour to bring about a negotiation. Unless, therefore, it is meant to allude to the endeavours which His Majesty has made since the close of the last Parliament, endeavours which I am willing to take upon trust, I desire that it may be clearly understood that I am not to be precluded by my vote this night from animadverting upon His Majesty’s Ministers for their former want of endeavours to bring about a negotiation for peace. There is much that deserves praise in the construction of the present speech. Ministers have omitted the words to which they have been so biggoted heretofore, of the war having been undertaken for “the cause of religion, humanity, and social order,” words calculated only to inflame and to exasperate the two nations against each other, and to set the probability of peace at a greater distance; neither have they come forward with their constant and unfounded phrase, “that the war was necessary.” They have acted wisely in thus abstaining from intemperate language; for surely at a time when they are about to negotiate for a peace, it would have been peculiarly ill-judged and unseasonable, to have made use of language repulsive and bitter to the people with whom you had to treat; nor would it have been wise to introduce words calculated to prevent unanimity in this House, upon the course which His Majesty has been slowly advised to pursue; for about the necessity of the war, and all the jargon of epithets that have been applied to it, there must always continue to be fundamental difference of opinion.

There are other parts of the speech which perhaps demand a little explanation, and which if we pass over for the time, it is to be understood that we are left at full liberty to inquire and to question the assertions hereafter; such is the declaration of the

flourishing state of our manufactures, trade, and commerce. I must take this upon trust; I cannot object to a fact, the proofs of which I have not before me. We shall soon have the means of knowing, upon better authority than mere assertion, the state of the country; and I trust it will turn out to be prosperous and flourishing. Our agreeing to the assertion in the mean time, must not be construed to preclude us from inquiry, much less to involve our assent. When I hear it said, that by the flourishing state of our manufactures, trade, and commerce, our resources are ample and sufficient for the crisis in which we are involved, I must hesitate in giving credit to an assertion which is so little supported by the public appearance of things. I must think when I look at the price of the general funds of the country, the state of the transferable securities of Government, the monstrous discounts upon the enormous quantity of paper which they have issued, together with the daily conferences of which we hear for schemes to relieve the pecuniary embarrassments of trade, I must be led to think that our resources are in a less favourable state than His Majesty's Ministers have chosen to make us believe they are; and when the question comes hereafter fairly before us, then, and not now, will be the proper moment for ascertaining the truth of this important fact, and of making the proper declaration thereon. There is one other part of the speech, I believe it is nearly, if not the concluding sentence, upon which I cannot forbear to make some observations; it is that part of the address in which we are made to rejoice in the general tranquillity of the country, a sentiment in which I heartily concur, for tranquillity at all times is a most desirable thing; but when we proceed farther and hear this tranquillity ascribed to the wisdom and energy of the laws, insinuating that the laws which were passed in the last session of the last Parliament, have secured to us this tranquillity and triumphed over anarchy and confusion, I must enter my solemn protest against the whole of this assertion, and against all such assertions. I have never been convinced that there were any such persons in this country, or at least that there were any number of persons in this country desirous of anarchy and confusion, worthy the attention of His Majesty, or of this House; but I must solemnly protest against the insinuation, that it is to the energy of those laws that we are indebted for the general tranquillity that is said to have reigned; general tranquillity arising out of the obedience which a rational people cheerfully pay to good laws must always be a subject of real rejoicing; but, if it is meant to be said, that general tranquillity has sprung out of the two laws of the last session of the last Parliament—laws which ought to be the object of our terror and abhorrence, and which are calculated to ex-

cite these feelings, I cannot rejoice in any such tranquillity. Should I be asked, have these laws produced tranquillity? I answer, no: it is not in the nature of such laws to produce tranquillity.—Such laws may produce a forced quiet, which I consider as a real alarm. Do we rejoice in such a tranquillity, where discussion is to be stifled, and men are to brood in secret over the grievances which they feel?—No: such a tranquillity alarms me more than tumult. It is a tranquillity which every man who loves freedom ought to see with pain—every man who loves order ought to see with terror. Sir, to the Constitution no man can feel a stronger attachment than myself: but I will not sport with the word Constitution; I will not use the word without explaining it:—My attachment is to the Constitution under which I was born—under which I was bred—not to that of the last Parliament, which did more to maim and disfigure the antient Constitution of England than any former Parliament that ever sat within these walls. To the protection of the antient Constitution alone I ascribe that undisturbed tranquillity which the country has enjoyed. Let me, then, Sir, be clearly understood, that I do not join in this insinuation of praise upon these abominable laws, nor ascribe to them effects to which I believe them to be inapplicable. Much as I wish for a general approbation of the measure of endeavouring to procure peace to this country, yet, Sir, I should think it was purchased at too dear a rate, if coupled with the approbation of these abhorrent laws; and I have thought it my duty to say so much, that my vote might not be misinterpreted into an acquiescence of this part of the address. I am one who think that the whole system of the war has been a faulty system; that the system of domestic politics has been equally faulty; I must, therefore, be of opinion, that whatever the result of the negotiations may be, it will still be the duty of the House to reconsider the general system of politics adopted of late years, and whether it be possible to go on if that system be persevered in. Peace certainly is the great object: it is preferable to any single object of policy; but whether peace will be effectual if there be no change in domestic politics, may be a matter of doubt. That peace, however, will be beneficial, whatever may be the system pursued, I am ready to assert. If the system continue to be a bad one, peace will diminish the calamities of it, if it be amended, peace will augment the benefits of it. At all events, peace must be desirable. In one case it will be a palliative, in the other it will be a remedy; but in both cases it cannot but be productive of good, and, therefore, it shall have my warmest support.—The noble Lord who moved the address with so much credit, as to jus-

tify the House in entertaining the most promising expectations of him, and the noble Lord well knows that it must at all times afford me peculiar pleasure to hear him distinguish himself as he has done this evening, the noble Lord, I say, went a little farther than the speech, and in speaking of the proper period for negotiation, said, that the present Government of France possessing stability, possessing security, was a proper Government to negotiate with. If you treat with a power, you ought to speak with respect of that power. It is therefore that I approve of the noble Lord's sentiments; for it must have struck him, as it must strike every sensible person, that if you mean to negotiate with the French Government, you ought to speak with respect and civility of the Executive Directory. I wish that something more of this kind had been introduced into the speech and the address. I do not mean to say that it was necessary to state the stability and security of the present Government of France; but after all the jealousies and personalities that have been entertained, I should have expected that His Majesty would have told us to whom he was sending a person; and if not to what government, at least to what country? I should have expected, that if in our differences with Holland, His Majesty had sent a person on a mission to the Hague, he would have made mention of the States General. I did expect, therefore, that he would, in this case, have told us that he meant to send a person to the Executive Directory of the French Republic. I perceive gentlemen on the other side of the House laugh at this expression. Are the Members of the Executive Directory so obscure in Europe, that if they had not been named, we should not have known to whom we had been sending a person? It is on this account that I thought the sentiment expressed by the noble Lord, respecting the present Government of France, a proof of his good sense. I know it may be said that men are apt to be tenacious of their own opinions; that I have carried the opinions which I expressed in the American war into this war, and that, as in the former instance, I supported the recognition of American independence, I have in the latter supported the recognition of the French Republic. This may be the case; but I must contend that it is agreeable to common sense, that when you enter into a negotiation, there may be points which are not of a nature to be insisted upon by the power negotiated with, but which are calculated to conciliate esteem, or if you will, to gratify the pride of such a power; that the Executive Directory are in such a situation as to have their pride hurt by the omission of such points, I do not believe; but if I were negotiating with any gentleman, I should certainly take care not to do

any thing that might seem to be a purposed omission, or a calling in question of any of the titles and dignities by which such gentleman was distinguished. If these things were omitted in the speech from mere inadvertency, I shall be extremely glad to find that there is no other cause. But they are material in another point of view—that the negotiation may be successful, I sincerely hope—but if unfortunately it should not be successful, much would have been gained by an attention to these things; they would have served to have convinced the people that the nature of the contest was changed, and that all ideas of restoring the old Government of France, or of interfering in the internal affairs of France, had been abandoned. I am sure that this would have produced the greatest advantages, on the supposition that the war was to be prolonged; upon this subject, however, I do not mean to press any alteration in the address, because, if omitted by accident, I will not thwart the prosecution of the main object by my remark; they might refuse my amendment, though convinced of their own error, from an unwillingness to be so corrected; and this is not the moment in which I shall endeavour to throw any thing that may be construed into a check upon their conduct. It is my wish to leave them full powers; and therefore I mention the circumstance without meaning to move any amendment in consequence of it. On the subject of the situation of this country with respect to Spain I shall say nothing, because His Majesty has informed us that he is not yet enabled to acquaint us with the issue of the discussions that have been entered into with that power. Ministers say that they have been forbearing: I hope it will be proved so. I hope too that the country will learn by the severe lesson which the American war, and the present war, have afforded them, that moderation and forbearance are the most fitting characteristics of a great nation, and the most consistent with true magnanimity. I own I was sanguine enough to suppose that the American war had taught them experience—I was mistaken; a second lesson of adversity was necessary; a second lesson they have had, and I trust it will prove effectual. On the differences with Spain I shall, as I have before stated, say nothing; it is not now the period to look back, a retrospect must come, but not at present; yet the very apprehension of a war with Spain, affords a proof of the short-sightedness of human wisdom. At the time when we entered into the war, Spain and Prussia were our firmest allies. Now, however, we are to expect, that if the war be continued, we are to have an enemy in Spain—Of Prussia I hear nothing, but I may at least suppose that we have no reason to expect any great assistance from that power. It has

been said that experience may be bought too dear ; as we have paid so dear a price for it, let us at least have the benefits of it, and let us go to negociation with moderation and forbearance. Of the terms of peace I purposely avoid saying any thing. I know the resources of the country to be still great, and sure I am, that if the people are convinced that the ambition of France renders it necessary to employ force, and to continue the war, those resources will be afforded with the utmost readiness. What are likely to be the terms of peace, I will not even conjecture ; what hitherto has been done can only be considered as an overture towards that desirable object ; but I have no difficulty in saying, that we ought to negotiate in the spirit of great moderation. By the spirit of great moderation, I do not mean that we shall accept degrading terms, but I will not hesitate in saying, that I should be inclined to find less fault with terms that may be faulty on this side of moderation, than faulty from a contrary principle, and from too great haughtiness. With regard to the Austrian victories which make a topic of animated exultation in His Majesty's speech, it may certainly be right to rejoice in the gallantry they have displayed, and the laurels they have recently acquired. No man admires their great military exertions more than I do ; but let it be recollected that we are called upon to rejoice on their having recovered only a part of what was lost in this campaign, and that it is not because they have reaped successes, calculated to obtain what Ministers themselves originally stated the object of the war to be, but because they have saved the House of Austria from the utter destruction with which it was threatened ; while we rejoice, I presume we can hardly flatter ourselves that the Austrians are likely to recover all that they have lost in the present campaign, much less what they have lost in all the campaigns that are past ; and even this, Sir, must furnish a new subject for reflection, which the achievements of our navy still farther serve to corroborate : the achievements of that navy have been brilliant and glorious ; at no former period have they displayed greater gallantry, and never perhaps equal skill. No eulogiums can be too high for their merits. Yet after all this, the character of the peace which we are desirous to obtain, and the utmost we can expect, is, that it shall be solid and of permanent duration ; this, I believe, is as high a character as the peace is likely to deserve. Then what must be the sort of conflict in which we are engaged, in which, after a four-years successful exertion of all the skill, and all the valour of our navy, in which they have invariably conquered and carried the flag of England triumphant to every quarter of the world ; all our efforts cannot produce to us a

peace either brilliant or glorious, but we must content ourselves with hoping for a peace that may be solid and permanent? Must we not own that there is something in the cause in which we are engaged radically defective, that palsies our efforts, and disappoints our strength? that there is something which demands from the common sense and from the prudence of Englishmen, a strict and a rigorous investigation, that we may discover what this something is, not merely to retrieve the present calamity, but guard our offspring against the error in future? A day will come for such a question; and I give my assent to the present address, without moving any amendment upon the points of which I do not cordially approve, because when the day of such a discussion does come, I shall have an opportunity to make the observations that I think it important for the House to entertain upon those points. No great distance of time shall elapse before I shall think it my duty to bring this matter before you, since I think it of the most essential importance to the well-being of the country, and to the true support and dignity of His Majesty's Crown, that an inquiry into all the causes which have brought the nation into its present condition, and produced the calamities of the present war, should be instituted for the purpose of advising His Majesty to make a fundamental change in the system upon which we have lately acted, both with regard to foreign and domestic policy. When this day shall come, and I shall move the House upon this great and constitutional subject, I should not like to be told that I have precluded myself from the discussion of these topics, and shut myself up from inquiring not merely into the causes, but the conduct of the war, as well as into the nature of our domestic misfortunes, by the assent which I had given to the address of this day. For this reason, Sir, I have thought it necessary to say so much, and with this reserve for a future day of discussion, I do not oppose the address to His Majesty upon his speech from the Throne.

Mr. Chancellor PITT now rose. Sir, though I feel myself impelled from more than one consideration to come forward on the present occasion, I shall not be under the necessity of troubling the House much at length. It is certainly to me matter of great satisfaction, that at so critical a conjuncture, indeed the most critical and the most important that has occurred during the present century, that on the only great and substantial question, on which the address proposes to express any opinion, there should be no difference of sentiment in this House, and that even the right honourable gentleman should have expressed his cordial concurrence. There are certainly many topics on which he touched in the course of his

speech in which I now differ with him, as much as ever I differed at any former period; but, with respect to the great and substantial object of the Address, the propriety of the conduct employed to bring about a solid and durable peace, such a peace as may be consistent with the permanent security and the just pretensions of the country, there does not subsist even the slightest shade of difference. That object is found to command the most full and most unequivocal support. Such a circumstance I must indeed consider as matter of just pride and of honest satisfaction. It exhibits the most decided and undeniable proof that the steps which His Majesty has taken towards negotiation, that the clear and explicit declaration that he has made, are in themselves so unexceptionable, and so well calculated for the end in view, that they must command assent from any man who retains the smallest care for the interest and honour of his country. Impressed with this feeling of satisfaction, I can have but little inclination to detain the House on points of slighter difference. I look with still higher satisfaction to the concurrence now expressed in the object of the address, as the pledge of general unanimity, and the omen of great exertions, if, unfortunately, that object should not be obtained. The honourable Gentleman justly states, that what hitherto has been done only amounts to an overture for peace. It is impossible to state what may be the result. We cannot pronounce what will be the disposition of the enemy, or what circumstances may occur to influence the fate of negotiation. We ought to look fairly to our situation. It holds out to us a chance of peace, if the enemy are disposed to accede to it on just and reasonable terms; but, on the other hand, if they are still actuated by ambitious projects, we shall gain another object by the course we have pursued; we shall unmask them in the eyes of Europe; we shall expose the injustice of their policy and their insatiable thirst of aggrandizement: and if no other advantage be gained, we at least shall be able to put to the proof the sincerity of that pledge which this day has been given—that if the enemy are not disposed to accede to peace on just and reasonable terms, the war will be supported by the unanimous voice and the collected force of the nation. I trust and hope that it may not be necessary to have recourse to such a test of sincerity; but, while we indulge with satisfaction in the hope of a more favourable issue, we must at the same time look to the other alternative; we must be prepared with all the force of the country to support the prosecution of the contest, if its continuance should be found necessary. If the unanimity of this day be accompanied with such views, if it is not an unanimity founded merely upon the pleasing sound of peace, the captivating charm of renewed tranquil-

lity, and the prospect of the termination of those scenes of horror and calamity with which war is always attended (such an unanimity would indeed be fatal to the country); but if it is an unanimity the result of rational and manly reflection, founded upon a careful consideration of the situation of the country, and prepared to meet every conjuncture, it cannot then be too highly prized. We must not put out of view those means of exertion which we still possess; we must fairly compare the situation of this country with that of the enemy, and the amount of our own acquisitions with the losses of our allies; we must estimate the extent of the sacrifices which, under all these circumstances, it may be fitting for us to make, in order to effect the restoration of peace. It is with a view to these principles, that unanimity becomes so peculiarly desirable in the present moment. The clear and unequivocal explanation which His Majesty has given of his conduct, with respect to peace, has commanded a general concurrence. If it be that sentiment which, on the one hand, is prepared to support the just pretensions and reasonable hopes of the country, and on the other to resist the unjustifiable demands and arrogant claims of the enemy, I shall then consider the unanimity of this day as the happiest æra in the history of the country. On this head I shall say no more, and agreeing thus far with the right honourable gentleman, I would wish to say as little as possible on the other points on which he touched in the course of his speech, and with respect to which we widely differ. They have been too often and too warmly discussed to be now forgotten by Gentlemen who sat in the former parliament; and in the concluding part of his speech the right honourable gentleman gave us an assurance that we should hear of them again. The right honourable gentleman has intimated as his opinion, that we must change the whole system of our interior policy, which he considers as inconsistent with the constitution of the country. I am happy, however, to find that he is so far satisfied with the constitution, as to ascribe to its protection that internal order and undisturbed tranquillity which he admitted that the country had for some time past enjoyed. He at the same time reprobated in the severest terms laws which were passed during the last parliament, and which he represented as pregnant with the most mischievous consequences, and declared that he could not subscribe to any construction of that part of His Majesty's speech which included those among the laws, the energy and wisdom of which had contributed to secure the tranquillity of the country. Having made this declaration, it would be unfair and uncandid on my part not to be equally explicit. I desire no gentleman to vote for the address upon any such qualification with respect to those

laws. I am firmly of opinion, that, exclusive of their influence, the peace of the country could not have been so successfully maintained, nor can I suffer the smallest reproach to fall upon the character of the last parliament, who displayed their wisdom and their energy in providing a remedy so suitable to the alarming nature of the crisis. If there is any ambiguity in the address, with respect to those laws, it is because they are so consistent with the spirit of the constitution which they were framed to protect, and so blended with the system of our jurisprudence, so congenial to the practice of former times, and so conformable even to the letter of former acts, that it was impossible to make any discrimination. It is to be recollected, that they were passed in a moment of alarm and turbulence; they had been found most admirably calculated to meet the emergency of the time. The address does not apportion with minute exactness what degree of tranquillity we have derived from the operation of those laws, when blended with the constitution, and what we might have enjoyed from the influence of laws previously subsisting; how much we were indebted for protection to the ancient strength of the edifice, or to those buttresses that were raised to support it in the moment of hurricane. There were some other points on which the right honourable gentleman touched. He seemed to consider, from the language of the address, that endeavours have only been made of late to procure peace. He ought to recollect that His Majesty's speech particularly refers to what has taken place since he last communicated with his parliament. If ever the day shall come when an examination shall be instituted into the steps which have been adopted to secure the re-establishment of the general tranquillity, I am confident that no endeavours for that purpose have been wanting on the part of His Majesty's Ministers. But gentlemen must be sensible, that what may be admitted as an endeavour to restore peace depends upon a variety of circumstances, and is likely to be differently appreciated by individuals of opposite sentiments. It depends on the relative state of parties, on the number of allies with whom we may be engaged to act, on the degree of attention we pay to their interests, and on the concert we wish to preserve with them. Taking all these necessary considerations into view, I again pledge myself that it will be found in the result of inquiry that Ministers have neglected no opportunity which could have been improved for the purpose of accelerating peace. But the right honourable gentleman has told us, that we are at last come to the period which he had all along pointed out; that we have now consented to adopt that course which he has uniformly recommended since the commencement of the contest—to send a person to Paris, and to try the

effect of negotiation. He takes to himself all the merit of that policy which we have tardily adopted, and so confident did he feel himself in this ground of self-exultation, that he declined all illustration of his victory, and merely made it the subject of one triumphant observation. His assertion was, "you are now taking those measures which, if you had listened to my counsels, you might have adopted four years ago." But does it follow that the measure was right then, because it is right now? May not a period of four years produce many events to justify a material change of policy, and to render measures wise and expedient, which at a certain time would neither have been prudent nor seasonable? Because you do not chuse to make peace the day after an unprovoked aggression, may you not be justified in holding out pacific overtures after a lapse of four years? The argument of the right honourable gentleman amounts to this, that, either you must make peace the day after the aggression, or not make it at all.—With respect to the relative situation of this country and Spain, it would not be consistent with my duty to go into any detail on that subject at the present moment.—As to the question of our resources, the right honourable gentleman admits them to be extensive and flourishing. They furnish indeed, in a moment like the present, a subject of peculiar congratulation and well-grounded confidence. If the revenue, after a four-years war, which might have been expected to have injured it so materially in so many branches, and after all the additional burthens which have been imposed, still keeps up to the rate at which it was stated last year, that circumstance is surely no slight source of satisfaction. With respect to the state of commerce, I am enabled to speak in a very different strain. Notwithstanding all the embarrassments which it has had to encounter, it has attained and still continues to enjoy a pitch of unexampled prosperity. Those embarrassments have proceeded from various causes; the expence of the war abroad, and the high price of articles of consumption at home; the situation of part of the continent, where the markets have been shut against us; and even the growth of our capital reacting upon the commerce which occasioned it, so that what was an unequivocal symptom of prosperity, was itself a cause of temporary distress. Of the continuance of this prosperity, we have now the best assurance. The state of our exports during the last six months has been equal to what they were in the most flourishing year of peace, 1792; and our foreign trade has even exceeded the produce of that year, which was the most productive of any in the history of this country. Under these circumstances, whatever temporary embarrassments may have arisen from the quantity of specie sent out of the country, from the

want of a sufficient circulating medium, from the state of foreign markets, and from the increase of our capital; and however these difficulties may for a time have obstructed the ordinary operations of finance, the commercial character of the country has lost neither its vigour nor importance. If such has been the state of things, at a period when the country has had to contend for every thing dear to it; if, notwithstanding all the obstacles which have clogged the machinery, the spring has retained so much force and energy, we may presume, that if, by the obstinacy and ambition of the enemy, we should be called to still greater exertions, that our resources as yet remain untouched, and that we shall be able to bring them into action with a degree of concert and effect worthy of the character of the British nation, and of the cause in which they will be employed. These resources have in them nothing hollow or delusive. They are the result of an accumulated capital, of gradually increasing commerce, of high and established credit. They are the fruits of fair exertion, of landable ingenuity, of successful industry; they have been produced under a system of order and of justice, while we, under many disadvantages, have been contending against a country which exhibits in every respect the reverse of the picture—a proof that the regular operation of those principles must triumph over the unnatural and exhausting efforts of violence and extortion. By these resources, we are now qualified to take such steps as may tend to conduct us to a solid and a durable peace; or, if we do not succeed in that object, to prosecute the contest with firmness and confidence. The right honourable gentleman suggested one remark, that the speech contained no recognition of the government of France. He wasted a good deal of ingenuity in attempting to prove that it ought to have contained an express acknowledgment of the French government. It ought to have occurred to him that a passport having been sent for and granted, some communication must have taken place on that occasion, and as the Executive Directory had been satisfied with the form of communication, and the mode in which they had been addressed, it could not be necessary for him to start a difficulty where they had found none. I can assure him, on the part of British Ministers, that no question of etiquette, no difficulty of form originating from them, shall be permitted to stand in the way of negotiation, or to obstruct the attainment of the great object of peace. As to the other points, the right honourable Gentleman has suggested what lessons we ought to derive from the experience of adversity. These lessons may be greatly varied according to the situation of parties and the different points of view in which the subject is considered. But, when the right honourable gentleman

tells us that the situation of this country is that of adversity, I can by no means agree to the proposition. How far it deserves to be ranked under that description, let those pronounce who are best acquainted with the state of our resources. It cannot surely be termed a state of adversity from any losses of our trade, the diminution of our capital, or from the reduction of any of our foreign possessions. We have not been greatly impoverished by the events of the war in the East and West Indies. We cannot be much weakened in our national strength, even upon the statement of the right honourable gentleman, by having our navy, in consequence of repeated triumphs over every hostile squadron, raised to a greater degree of glory and of fame than it had ever before attained. Where, then, are we to look for the symptoms of this adversity? Are we to look for them in the losses and disasters of our allies? But, does the right honourable gentleman appeal to these as a criterion of adversity, when in the same breath I hear him hold out as a source of complaint, that you are not, under your present circumstances, sure of a triumphant peace? And why can you not command such a peace?—because you will not separate your own greatness, and your own commerce, from the interest and from the fate of your allies; because you refuse to purchase peace for yourselves on any other terms than those which will secure the tranquillity of Europe, and consider the situation of Great Britain as chained to that of the continent, by the bonds of a liberal and comprehensive policy. If what has been lost on the continent is a subject of regret, it is at least a topic on which we have no reason to reproach ourselves. If even the prospect in that quarter continued as gloomy as it was some time since, and if the extremity had not roused the armies of the Emperor to those gallant and spirited exertions which have been crowned with such brilliant and unprecedented success, no share of blame could attach to us. While the violence of France has been over-running so great a part of Europe, and every where carrying desolation in its progress, your naval exertions have enabled you to counterbalance their successes, by acquisitions in different parts of the globe, and to pave the way for the restoration of peace to your allies, on terms which their own strength might have been unable to procure. If you look indeed to the geographical situation of the seat of war, the Emperor has not regained by his recent victories all that he had formerly lost. But do you count for nothing the destruction and ruin of those armies, by whom all the previous successes of the enemy had been achieved? Do you count for nothing the glorious and immortal testimony that has been exhibited to mankind, that disciplined valour must finally triumph over those principles that the

war was undertaken to oppose, and which owed all their extraordinary and unaccountable successes to the violence in which they originated, and the excesses with which they were accompanied? A memorable warning has also been afforded with respect to the true consequences which have resulted to those foreign powers who, in opposition to their true interests, have courted the alliance of that enemy, and expected to find security in disgraceful tranquillity. Recent events have served also to exculpate the characters of those who were calumniated as desirous to embrace their principles, and receive their laws, and in Germany they have left behind them nothing but the memory of their wrongs, and a feeling of eternal resentment. Are such effects to be considered as of small importance, or to be put in competition with the reduction of a fortress, or the possession of a district? Of the virtues to be acquired in the school of adversity, the right honourable gentleman only mentioned those of moderation and forbearance. Moderation I should consider as that virtue which is best adapted to the dawn of prosperity: there are other virtues of no less importance which are to be acquired under a reverse of fortune, and which are equally becoming in those who are called to suffer:—there are the virtues of adversity endured and adversity resisted—of adversity encountered and adversity surmounted. The recent example of Germany has furnished an illustrious instance of fortitude and perseverance, and their fortitude and perseverance have had their merited reward. These were lessons which I trust this country has not to learn. England has never shewn itself deficient in firmness and magnanimity: it is unrivalled in resource; it has always been foremost in the career of honourable exertion, and it has only to maintain its accustomed vigour and perseverance to effect the restoration of general tranquillity upon terms consistent with the dignity of its own character, and the security and interest of Europe.

Mr. FOX said a few words in explanation, in which he complained that Mr. Chancellor Pitt had misrepresented his argument respecting the propriety of the time for negotiation. He did not argue, that because it was right to negotiate now, that it was right to negotiate at a former period. What he contended was (and he had not altered his opinion from any thing that he had heard) that if it were prudent and wise to send an ambassador to Paris now, when the French have carried their arms into the heart of Germany, and are in possession of Italy, it would not have been dastardly and pusillanimous to have adopted that measure, when they had not one foot of that territory. He allowed that it might be sometimes pusillanimous to negotiate; but he was convinced that those who had

been in the habit of applying this term during the course of the war to any proposition for negotiation, had now renounced that opinion. He still retained his opinion respecting the new laws, and when he voted for the address, he did not include them in his construction of that part of it in which mention is made of the wisdom and energy of the laws.

The question upon the address was then put and carried *nemine contradicente*.

Adjourned till to-morrow.

Friday, October 7.

The House having met, the Speaker observed, that he understood there were several petitions to be presented to the House, complaining of undue elections of Members to serve in Parliament, with respect to which he supposed the House would wish to adopt a plan similar to that which had been pursued in the last Parliament. He would therefore submit to their consideration the resolutions then entered into.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS moved the resolutions, which were divided into five classes; 1st, such as complained of no return; 2d, such as complained of double returns; 3d, petitions of two or more persons; 4th, such as complained of returns only; and 5th, petitions which did not come within any of the other classes. The adoption of these resolutions was agreed to.

A petition was presented against the return made for the Borough of Caermarthen, the consideration of which was appointed for Thursday the 27th instant; and a petition against the return for the Borough of Leominster, on the 8th of November.

A petition was presented on behalf of General M'Leod, complaining of an undue return for the Borough of Melbourn-Port.—Ordered to be taken into consideration on the 10th of November.

Another petition was presented against the return for the Borough of Guildford.—Ordered to be taken into consideration on the 15th of November.

A petition of George Tierney, was read; setting forth, that, by a standing order of the House, it is resolved as follows, that is to say, “that, if any person hereafter to be elected into a place for to sit and serve in the House of Commons for any county, city, town, port, or borough, after the teste or the issuing out of the writ of election, upon the calling or summoning any parliament hereafter, or after any such place becomes vacant hereafter, in the time of parliament, shall, by himself, or by any other on his be-

half, or at his charge, at any time before the day of his election, give any person, having voice in any such election, any meat or drink exceeding in the true value ten pounds in the whole, in any place or places but in his own dwelling house or habitation, being the usual place of his abode for six months last past, or shall, before such election be made and declared, make any other present, gift, or reward, or any promise, obligation, or engagement to do the same, either to any such person or persons in particular, or to any such county, city, town, port, or borough, in general, or to or for the use or benefit of them, or any of them, every such entertainment, present, gift, reward, promise, obligation, or engagement, is by this House declared to be bribery, and such entertainment, present, gift, reward, promise, obligation, or engagement, being duly proved, is and shall be sufficient ground, cause, and matter, to make every such election void as to the person so offending, and to render the person so elected incapable to sit in parliament by such election ;” and that by an act, passed in the 7th year of the reign of King William the Third, intituled, “ An act for preventing charge and expence in elections of members to serve in parliament,” reciting, that, “ Whereas grievous complaints are made, and manifestly appear to be true, in the kingdom, of undue elections of members to parliament, by excessive and exorbitant expences, contrary to the laws, and in violation of the freedom due to the election of representatives for the Commons of England in parliament, to the great scandal of the kingdom, dishonourable, and may be destructive to the constitution of parliaments, wherefore, for remedy therein, and that all elections of members to parliament may be hereafter freely and indifferently made without charge or expence,” it was enacted and declared, that no person or persons thereafter to be elected to serve in Parliament for any county, city, town, borough, port, or place, within the kingdom of England, after the teste of the writ of summons to Parliament, or after the teste, or the issuing out, or ordering of the writ or writs of election, upon the calling or summoning of any Parliament thereafter, or after any such place should become vacant thereafter, in the time of the then present, or of any other Parliament, should thereafter, by himself or themselves, or by any other ways or means on his or their behalf, or at his or their charge, before his or their election to serve in Parliament for any county, city, town, borough, port, or place, directly or indirectly, give, present, or allow, to any person or persons having voice or vote in such election, any money, meat, drink, entertainment, or provision, or make any present, gift, reward, or entertainment, or should any time there-

after make any promise, agreement, obligation, or engagement, to give or allow any money, meat, drink, provision, present, reward, or entertainment, to or for any such person or persons in particular, or to any such county, city, town, borough, port, or place, in general, or to or for the use, advantage, benefit, employment, profit, or preferment, of any such person or persons, place or places, in order to be elected, or for being elected, to serve in Parliament for such county, city, borough, town, port or place; and it was thereby further enacted and declared, that every person and persons so giving, presenting, or allowing, making, promising, or engaging, doing, acting, or proceeding, should be, and were thereby declared and enacted disabled and incapacitated upon such election to serve in Parliament for such county, city, town, borough, port or place, and that such person or persons should be deemed and taken, and were thereby declared and enacted to be deemed and taken, no Members in Parliament, and should not act, sit, or have any vote or place in Parliament, but should be, and were thereby declared and enacted to be, to all intents, constructions, and purposes, as if they had been never returned or elected members for the parliament; and that, at the last election for the Borough of Southwark, George Woodford Thelluffon, Esq. Henry Thornton, Esq. and the petitioner, were candidates to represent the said borough in parliament; and that the said George Woodford Thelluffon, by himself, his agents, friends, and managers, did, after the teste and the issuing out of the writ of election, give to persons having vote in such election, meat and drink, and also make other presents, gifts, and rewards, to such persons contrary to, and in defiance of, the standing order of the House herein before recited; and the petitioner prays, that he may be allowed, without loss of time, duly to prove the same, as a sufficient ground, cause, and matter, to make the said election void, and to render the said George Woodford Thelluffon incapable to sit in parliament by such election; and that the said George Woodford Thelluffon, by himself, his agents, friends, and managers, and by other ways and means, on the behalf, or at the charge of him the said George Woodford Thelluffon, did, after the vacancy happened for the said Borough of Southwark, and after the teste of the writ, give, present, and allow, to persons having voice or vote in the said election, money, meat, drink, entertainment, and provision, and did make presents, gifts, rewards, and entertainments, and promises, agreements, obligations, and engagements, to give or allow money, meat, drink, provision, presents, rewards, advantages, and entertainments, to and for several persons so having or

claiming right to vote in the said election, and to or for the use, advantage, benefit, and profit, of such persons so having or claiming right to vote in the said election, in order to procure him the said George Woodford Thellusson to be elected to serve in parliament for the said borough of Southwark, contrary to, and in contempt of, the provisions of the act, passed in the 7th year of the reign of King William the Third, hereinbefore recited, whereby the said George Woodford Thellusson is disabled and incapacitated upon such election to serve in parliament for the said borough of Southwark, and is to be deemed and taken no member in parliament, and ought not to act, sit, or have any vote or place in Parliament, but is to all intents, constructions, and purposes, as if he had never been returned or elected member for the parliament; and therefore praying that an early day may be appointed to take the premises into consideration.

Ordered, That the said petition be taken into consideration upon Tuesday, the 1st day of November next, at three of the clock in the afternoon.

A petition of the honourable Augustus Ludlow, commonly called Lord Preston, of the kingdom of Ireland, and Robert Adair, Esquire, was read; setting forth, that the petitioners and William Joseph Dennison, Esquire, and John Angerstein, Esquire, were candidates at the last election of burgesses to serve in parliament for the borough of Camelford, in the county of Cornwall, held on or about the 30th day of May, 1796, and that the inhabitants of the said borough of Camelford, paying scot and lot, have a right to vote at the election of burgesses to serve in parliament for the said borough; and that the mayor of the said borough, who acted as the returning officer at the said late election, took upon him unlawfully to reject the petitioners as candidates, under pretence that they had not been put in nomination by any of the burgesses or freemen of the said borough, in whom he asserted the right of election to be exclusively vested, although the petitioners were repeatedly proposed as candidates by one or more of the inhabitants of the said borough paying scot and lot, and entitled to vote at the said late election; and that a majority of the persons, entitled to vote at the said late election of members to serve in parliament for the said borough, duly tendered their votes for the petitioners at such election (which votes the said mayor took upon himself, without lawful or sufficient cause, to disallow and reject) and that the petitioners ought therefore to have been returned duly elected to serve in parliament as burgesses for the said borough; notwithstanding which, the said mayor has returned the said William Joseph Dennison and John Angerstein

as duly elected to serve in parliament for the said borough, in violation of the rights of the lawful electors of the said borough, and to the great injury of the petitioners; and that the said mayor admitted divers persons to vote for the said William Joseph Dennison and John Angerstein at the said late election of members to serve in parliament for the said borough of Camelford, who were not entitled to vote at the said election; and that the said mayor, being the returning officer as aforesaid at the said late election, did not at the said late election administer, or cause to be administered, to the poll clerk, or person who acted as poll clerk, and took the poll at the said election, the oath required by law to be taken by all poll clerks, or persons acting as clerks, in taking the poll at every election of members of parliament; and that the said William Joseph Dennison and John Angerstein, by means of themselves, their agents, and other persons, previous to and at the said late election were guilty of bribery, and did thereby corrupt and procure divers of the persons, who voted at the said late election, to give their votes at the same for the said William Joseph Dennison and John Angerstein; and therefore praying the House to take the premises into their consideration, and to grant the petitioners such relief as the justice of the case may require, and as they are entitled to.

Ordered, That the said petition be taken into consideration upon Thursday, the 3d. day of November next, at three of the clock in the afternoon.

Lord MORPETH brought up the report of the address, which was read a first and second time, and ordered to be (*nemine contradicente*) carried to His Majesty by the whole House, and such members as were of His Majesty's Privy Council were desired to inquire when His Majesty would be pleased to receive the same.

His Majesty's most gracious speech was ordered to be taken into consideration to-morrow. Adjourned.

Saturday, October 8.

Lord Viscount STOPFORD reported to the House, That His Majesty, having been waited upon, pursuant to the order of yesterday, humbly to know His Majesty's pleasure, when he would be pleased to be attended by this House, had been pleased to appoint to be attended this day, at half an hour after two of the clock, at his palace of Saint James.

Accordingly Mr. Speaker, attended by several of the Members, proceeded to St. James's with the following address

tions which are directed to the great object of defeating all the designs of our enemies, of restoring to the people the blessings of a secure and honourable peace, and of delivering down unimpaired, to the latest posterity, those civil and religious blessings by which these kingdoms have been so eminently distinguished under the protection of your Majesty's just and auspicious government.

Monday, October 10.

Mr. Speaker reported to the House, That the House attended His Majesty upon Saturday last, with their address; to which His Majesty was pleased to give this most gracious answer:

Gentlemen,

I return you my particular thanks for this dutiful and affectionate address. The cordial and unanimous assurances of your continued and zealous support afford me the utmost satisfaction in this important conjuncture: they must have the happiest tendency to give effect to my endeavours for the restoration of peace on secure, honourable, and adequate terms; and they afford me, at the same time, a just confidence, that, if this desirable end cannot be obtained, I shall be enabled to prosecute the war with re-doubled vigour and activity in support of our dearest interests.

The House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply to take into consideration His Majesty's most gracious speech: and that part of the speech being read which related to the supplies necessary for the ensuing year, the Committee resolved that a supply be presented to His Majesty, and the report of the resolution was ordered to be received morrow.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved, That there be laid before this House; an account of the value of British and foreign merchandize imported and exported for the half years ending the 5th of July 1795, the 5th of January 1796, and the 5th of July 1796; distinguishing the several articles which exceed in value 10,000l.

That there be laid before this House, an account of the net produce of all the permanent taxes in the quarters ending on the 5th of January, 5th of April, 5th of July, and 10th of October, in the years 1795 and 1796, respectively.

That there be laid before this House, an account of the net produce of the permanent taxes which subsisted previous to the 5th of January 1791, in the years ending the 10th of October 1795 and 1796 respectively; adding thereto the difference between the produce of the duties on home-made spirits in each year respectively,

and the average produce thereof in three years ending the 5th of January 1795 ; and adding likewise the amount of the sums paid from the revenue of customs on account of bounties for corn imported, or bounties for raising seamen.

A petition was presented by Thomas Burges, Esq. against the return of the borough of Bridport, in Dorsetshire, complaining that Charles Sturt, Esq. was not duly returned.

A petition of William Wrightson, Esq. was read, setting forth, that, at the last election of burgesses to serve in Parliament for the borough of Downton, in the county of Wilts, the petitioner and John Motteux, Esq. and the honourable Edward Bouverie and Sir William Scott, Knight, were candidates ; and that the said election came on at Downton aforesaid on the 27th day of May last, and a poll being demanded, the same was taken before Robert Blake, Esq. who acted as the returning officer for the said borough, under an appointment as deputy to William Boucher, Esq. the steward of the manor and borough of Downton aforesaid ; and that the said Robert Blake did, at the said poll so taken by him, partially, illegally, and wrongfully, reject several legal votes, which were tendered in favour of the petitioner and the said John Motteux, and did receive many illegal votes in favour of the said Edward Bouverie and Sir William Scott, and, under colour of a pretended majority in favour of the said Edward Bouverie and Sir William Scott ; and although in fact there was a great majority of legal votes in favour of the petitioner and the said John Motteux, the said Robert Blake did declare the said Edward Bouverie and Sir William Scott duly elected, and hath taken upon himself, falsely and illegally, to make a return of the said Edward Bouverie and Sir William Scott, as burgesses to serve in Parliament for the said borough, to the great prejudice of the petitioner, who was duly elected ; and therefore praying the House to take the premises into consideration, and to grant the petitioner such relief therein as to the House shall seem meet.

Ordered, That the said petition be taken into consideration upon Thursday, the 17th day of November next, at three of the clock in the afternoon.

A petition of Moses Barling, William Mowland, Peter Wornell, Thomas Mitchell the elder, John Matthews, and John Edsall, freeholders of the borough of Downton, in the county of Wilts, was also read ; setting forth, that, at the last election of burgesses to serve in Parliament for the said borough of Downton, William Wrightson, Esq. John Motteux, Esq. the honourable Edward Bouverie, and Sir William Scott, Knight, were candi-

dates : and that the said election came on at Downton aforesaid on the 27th day of May last, and a poll being demanded, the same was taken before Robert Blake, Esq. who acted as returning officer for the said borough, under an appointment as deputy to William Boucher, Esq. the steward of the manor and borough of Downton aforesaid ; and that the petitioners, Thomas Mitchell, the elder, John Matthews, and John Edfall, being severally freeholders of burgage tenements within the said borough of Downton, and lawful electors of burgessees to serve in Parliament for the said borough, did at the said poll tender their votes for the said William Wrightson and John Motteux to the said Robert Blake, who ought to have admitted their said votes on the said poll, but the said Robert Blake did partially, illegally, and wrongfully, reject their said votes, and did receive for the said borough many illegal votes in favour of the said Edward Bouverie and Sir William Scott, and, under colour of a majority so procured in favour of the said Edward Bouverie and Sir William Scott ; and although in fact there was a great majority of legal votes in favour of the said William Wrightson and John Motteux, the said Robert Blake did declare the said Edward Bouverie and Sir William Scott duly elected, and hath taken upon himself falsely and illegally to make a return of the said Edward Bouverie and Sir William Scott as burgessees to serve in Parliament for the said borough, to the great prejudice of the petitioners ; and that the petitioners are ready and desirous to substantiate and prove their several rights to vote at the said election, and also to prove the illegality of the several illegal votes admitted for the said Edward Bouverie and Sir William Scott, and therefore praying the House to take the premises into consideration, and to grant to the petitioners such relief therein as to the House shall appear just.

Ordered, That the said petition be taken into consideration at the same time that the last preceding petition shall be taken into consideration.

Tuesday, October 11.

The House having met yesterday at half past three o'clock, a petition was presented, complaining of an undue election for Ayrshire, in Scotland, and ordered to be taken into consideration on Thursday the 24th of November next.

Upon the motion of Mr. STEELE, it was ordered that no petition or private bill should be received subsequent to Friday the 3d day of February.

Mr. HOBART brought up the report of the opinion of the Committee of Supply, which was, that a supply should be granted to His Majesty. To this the House agreed *nem. con.*

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved for estimates of the ordinary expences of the Navy, and the half-pay establishment for the charges of building and repairing ships, of the land forces, of the out-pensioners of Chelsea Hospital, &c. &c. and that an address should be made to His Majesty, requesting him to give directions for the same being laid before the House; after which he moved that the House should resolve itself into a Committee of Supply this day se'nnight. Agreed to.

INVASION.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved to have the following paragraph of the King's speech read:

“ You will feel this peculiarly necessary at a moment when the
“ enemy has openly manifested the intention of attempting a de-
“ scent on these kingdoms. It cannot be doubted what would be
“ the issue of such an enterprize, but it befits your wisdom to neg-
“ lect no precautions that may either preclude the attempt, or se-
“ cure the speediest means of turning it to the confusion and ruin of
“ the enemy.”

He then gave notice, that on Tuesday next he would move for a Committee of the whole House, for the purpose of proposing in it a measure calculated to protect the country against the possible danger alluded to in the speech from the Throne.

The House adjourned at four o'clock.

An ACCOUNT of the Value of BRITISH and FOREIGN MERCHANDIZE imported and exported, for the half Years ending the 5th July, 1795, the 5th January, 1796, and the 5th July, 1796; distinguishing the several ARTICLES which exceed in Value 10,000l.

FOREIGN MERCHANDIZE IMPORTED.

SPECIES of GOODS.	Half Year ending 5th July 1795.	Half Year ending 5th Jan. 1796.	Half Year ending 5th July 1796.
	£.	£.	£.
Ashes, Pearl and Pot	17,754	43,688	38,391
Barilla — — —	34,237	30,237	26,448
Brimstone — — —	3,344	5,385	11,597
Brilles, undrest — — —	3,262	18,276	15,022
Cattle, Cows, and Oxen	2,408	8,435	7,360
Cork — — —	9,205	10,440	4,258
Corn.			
Barley — — —	7,691	6,233	3,958
Beans — — —	7,261	3,454	12,214
Oats — — —	194,581	52,920	207,578
Pease — — —	14,924	4,808	18,723
Rye — — —	1,714	7,514	51,079
— Meal — — —	—	13,843	3,921
Wheat — — —	48,543	305,339	432,957
— Flour — — —	2,496	16,394	58,515
Drugs.			
Cassia Fistula — — —	5,674	8,036	122
Cortex Peru — — —	20,213	1,703	11,678
Gum Arabic — — —	1,091	9,076	7,522
Isinglass — — —	5,810	19,828	1,469
Juniper Berries — — —	3,563	10,079	6,009
Succus Liquoritiæ — — —	6,497	19,012	17,091
Dye Stuffs, &c.			
Annotto — — —	2,943	5,693	4,344
Cochineal — — —	109,417	125,208	60,540
Fustic — — —	8,611	11,593	3,452
Indigo — — —	55,178	31,153	25,751
Logwood — — —	12,308	41,754	26,373
Madder — — —	20,051	64,825	45,087
— Roots — — —	3,906	5,389	24,361
Mahogany — — —	2,419	2,147	14,406
Redwood — — —	12,649	6,710	13,339

Elephant's Teeth	—	4,085	7,752	7,873
Feathers for Beds	—	2,552	7,502	6,051
Fish, Herrings, White	—	302	16,085	303
Flax, Rough	—	32,449	160,092	106,385
Fruit, Lem. and Orang.	—	11,709	11,612	16,576
Glass Plates	—	4,627	3,547	9,977

Grocery.

Cocoa	—	3,532	10,237	626
Coffee	—	402,494	888,909	927,545
Currants	—	61,537	20,601	22,495
Ginger	—	1,368	19,652	3,811
Pimento	—	7,775	25,554	11,497
Raisins. { Denia	—	22,637	4,053	11,347
{ Lexia	—	9,750	15,600	5,073
{ Smyrna	—	8,022	7,888	894
{ Solis	—	4,943	8,635	3,093
Rice	—	45,406	56,744	132,440
Sugar, Brown	—	315,032	2,151,701	373,085
Hemp, Rough	—	65,060	393,672	55,847
Hides, Losh	—	3,586	6,721	2,614
— Ox or Cow	—	16,105	16,523	13,976
Iron Bar	—	78,959	356,215	108,213

Linen.

Canvas, Hessens	—	15,830	22,783	16,053
— Spruce	—	5,496	23,019	5,762
Germany, Narrow	—	51,642	60,814	58,624
Irish, Plain	—	573,636	606,014	615,643
Russia, broad, above	22½	36,584	85,384	27,834
—	31½	4,406	6,443	1,511
—	36	10,114	31,449	9,729
— Narrow	—	4,639	10,985	3,151
Oil, Ordinary	—	23,818	23,063	54,194
— Salad	—	3,014	8,316	3,437
— Train	—	33,232	83,894	51,953

Provisions.

Bacon	—	48,897	15,258	98,203
Beef	—	148,976	50,581	115,716
Butter	—	129,605	175,277	165,043
Cheese	—	2,694	6,087	18,846
Pork	—	89,837	86,517	153,117
Seeds, Linseed	—	5,841	44,845	13,753
Silk, Raw	—	72,326	36,074	48,143
— Thrown	—	143,138	261,256	354,870

Skins.				
Beaver	—	144	31,228	4,648
Calf, Raw	—	6,243	34,344	8,854
Deer, in Hair	—	17,695	43,525	24,401
Goat, Raw	—	9,732	19,176	19,127
Martin	—	629	13,971	4,257
Spirits, Brandy	—	20,711	16,000	69,220
— Geneva	—	2,842	8,350	13,503
— Rum	—	13,658	137,232	31,791
Starch	—	—	463	46,334
Tallow	—	39,297	95,620	98,357
Tar	—	26,946	61,251	27,103
Tobacco	—	84,914	116,700	74,449
Turpentine	—	11,643	11,288	17,262
Wax, Bees	—	11,018	9,136	4,207
Whale Fins	—	9,696	35,111	369
Wine.				
French	—	7,112	6,936	9,237
Madeira	—	2,189	12,106	2,895
Port	—	283,532	317,671	135,279
Spanish	—	73,650	90,211	26,515
Wood.				
Deals	—	16,588	35,623	21,211
Masts	—	40,159	142,041	104,801
Plank, Oak	—	2,955	11,347	7,409
Staves	—	34,172	35,210	14,541
Timber, Fir	—	25,908	69,499	44,612
Wool, Cotton	—	310,615	438,637	402,446
— Spanish	—	68,838	219,002	143,926
Yarn, Linen, Raw	—	54,460	283,955	178,686
Miscellaneous Articles	—	435,250	970,499	675,345
Total	—	4,786,742	10,043,184	6,999,659

Excess in Favour of the Imports of the Half Year,
 ending 5th July, 1796, compared with the cor-
 responding Period, 1795, } 2,212,917

Note.—From the Manner in which the Importations from the Countries within the Limits of the East India Company's Charter are brought to Account in the Books of the Customs, the Half Yearly Periods cannot be distinguished, nor can any Account whatever be as yet rendered of the East India Imports for the Half Year, ending 5th July, 1796. The Inspector General, for these Reasons, has, in order to preserve the comparative View, omitted, in all the three Periods of the above Account,

the Value of the Importations from India and China, which, in the Year 1795, amounted to 5,760,795l. agreeably to the Estimates or Rates of Value in his Office.-

The principal Importations from the West Indies, and almost the whole Importations from Canada and the Baltic, are made in the Half Year, ending at Christmas, the Value, therefore, of the Imports of that Period will always be found greatly to exceed those of the Half Year, ending at Midsummer.

FOREIGN MERCHANDIZE EXPORTED.

	Half Year ending 5th July, 1795	Half Year ending 5th Jan. 1796.	Half Year ending 5th July, 1796
	£	£.	£.
Ashes Pearl and Pot	15,643	15,127	8,207
Borax, refined	14,510	7,929	6,108
Cortex Peru	7,410	2,685	2,528
Rhubarb	45,014	57,186	31,516
Cochineal	56,522	74,228	31,352
Fustic	3,791	6,285	4,968
Indigo	69,187	206,879	183,388
Logwood	2,766	21,597	9,604
Nicoragua	6,929	4,563	6,289
Flax, Rough	7,358	2,843	20,182
Cocoa	6,747	77,780	3,716
Coffee	1,174,094	3,204,877	2,157,220
Ginger	6,711	19,291	8,330
Pepper	111,660	138,427	115,949
Pimento	10,990	12,862	10,604
Rice	7,642	18,115	28,805
Sugar	183,909	593,958	303,160
Tea	222,675	242,600	220,857
Iron Bar	24,342	28,593	65,977
Germany, Narrow	24,282	45,610	31,090
Irish	135,352	246,848	160,568
At Value	13,887	16,696	21,677
Russia, above 36	9,844	12,833	16,100
Callicoes	576,849	447,771	649,865
Muslins	281,034	157,612	201,759
Nankeens	2,897	10,858	5,678
Prohibited	240,017	303,666	298,613
Beef	10,792	23,762	26,480
Butter	3,837	9,790	23,222
Pork	8,846	9,183	12,775
Salt	1,770	10,635	1,140

Silk, Bengal Raw	—	13,014	12,691	23,310
Thrown	—	21,429	19,708	39,481
Skins, Beaver	—	12,034	7,286	871
Deer in Hair	—	8,443	12,870	23,089
Spirits, Rum	—	51,086	38,102	43,153
Tobacco	—	224,561	207,986	134,813
Wine, French	—	14,647	23,757	20,370
Port	—	6,766	17,846	16,218
Spanish	—	8,977	4,304	22,067
Wool, Cotton	—	22,890	12,752	11,574
Spanish	—	9,174	16,129	9,207
Miscellaneous	—	182,915	385,830	305,760
Total	—	3,862,243	6,794,350	5,317,640

Excess in Favour of the Foreign Merchandize exported,
in the Half Year ending 5th July, 1796, compared
with the corresponding Period of 1795 — } 1,455,397

The large Excess of the Value of the Exports, in the Half Year ending at Christmas, over the Half Year ending at Midsummer, in a great Measure arises from the West India Products, such as Sugar, Coffee, Cocoa, &c. being chiefly exported from this Country in the Christmas Quarter.

BRITISH MANUFACTURES EXPORTED.

	Half Year ending 5th July, 1795	Half Year ending 5th Jan. 1796.	Half Year ending 5th July, 1796
	£.	£.	£.
Allum	15,960	19,564	18,496
Apothecary Ware	24,954	16,921	26,224
Apparel, Garments	10,962	7,129	16,393
Bark	3,657	11,778	34,638
Beer	26,561	29,095	35,910
Books	12,647	8,537	8,472
Brass, Wrought	221,113	53,630	139,101
Candles, Tallow	13,083	14,600	21,937
Cattle, Horses	6,100	4,680	4,470
Chariots and Coaches	17,650	1,785	1,075
Coals	218,877	218,307	21,527

Colours for Painters	26,849	27,726	41,611
Copper, Wrought	331,597	108,048	211,305
Copperas	8,943	5,005	6,709
Cordage	22,927	6,314	20,520
Corn, Wheat Flour	8,748	20,546	18,205
Cotton Manufactures	895,179	1,157,500	1,463,699
Fish, Herrings, White	7,129	16,115	11,620
Pilchards	5,299	51,926	3,661
Glass	43,533	39,585	66,519
Gunpowder	5,869	10,051	14,770
Haberdashery	47,702	49,513	60,603
Hats, Beaver	100,504	37,947	91,268
Felt	37,696	46,482	57,664
Hops	21,730	26,150	17,868
Iron, Nails	25,945	13,648	23,570
Wrought	453,147	425,566	506,333
Lead	87,168	51,850	58,042
White	12,177	6,089	4,515
Leather, Tanned	19,943	18,476	21,541
Wrought	22,467	24,564	32,564
Linens	203,601	347,836	328,854
Molasses	14,255	6,073	4,481
Military Stores	51,400	3,425	28,400
Oil, Train	4,140	22,991	7,006
Pewter	33,605	35,871	45,852
Plate, Wrought Silver	14,993	12,084	15,256
Bacon	6,358	6,948	7,655
Biscuit	5,315	2,516	12,808
Cheese	6,664	8,123	7,371
Salt, Rock	8,427	14,746	21,367
White	31,386	52,886	46,049
Silk in Pieces	102,515	106,556	136,755
— sewing	50,017	54,413	69,672
Soap, Hard	35,116	21,183	31,623
Spelter	4,341	7,509	18,886
Stationary	5,100	9,107	7,550
Steel	76,455	7,254	37,497
Stockings, Thread	55,085	44,664	17,159
Sugar, Refined	376,276	337,984	275,057
Tin	55,851	136,594	55,918
— Plates	26,914	46,446	24,682

Watches	—	18,902	25,048	25,221
Woollen Goods	—	2,045,958	2,469,637	2,821,192
Yarn, Cotton	—	14,915	32,966	58,959
Miscellaneous	—	1,586,370	1,746,086	1,982,962
Total	—	7,590,065	8,088,553	9,346,062

Excess in Favour of the British Manufactures exported,
in the Half Year ending 5th July, 1796, com-
pared with the corresponding Period of 1795 } 1,755,997

Excess in Favour of the Foreign Merchandize exported,
in the Half Year ending 5th July, 1796, brought
from its proper Account } 1,455,397

Total Increase of British and Foreign Merchandize ex-
ported, in the Half Year ending 5th July, 1796,
compared with the corresponding Period of the pre-
ceding Year } 3,211,394

THOMAS IRVING,
Inspector General of the Imports and Exports of Great
Britain and the British Colonies.

As the Returns of the Imports and Exports of Scotland for the
Half Year ending 5th July, 1796, are not yet received, the
above Account therefore is confined to England.

Inspector General's Office,
Custom House, London,
13th Oct. 1796.

AN ACCOUNT of the net produce of all the CUSTOMS of July, and 10th of October, in the Year 1795.

Vol. I.

	In the QUARTERS ending.				Total in the Year ending 10th October 1795.	
	5th January 1795.	5th April 1795.	5th July 1795.	10th October 1795.		
CUSTOMS —	£. s. d. 936,238 4 6	£. s. d. 772,439 4 5½	£. s. d. 395,242 9 8	£. s. d. 1,053,725 12 9	£. s. d. 3,157,645 11 4½	
Excise —	1,844,385 18 9½	1,443,750	2,072,349 17 ½	1,806,149 15 11½	7,166,635 11 9½	
STAMPS —	238,981	326,816	270,343	371,411 12 7	1,207,551 12 7	
	3,019,605 3 3¾	2,543,005 4 5½	2,737,935 6 8½	3,231,287 1 3½	11,531,832 15 9½	
INCIDENTS.	£.					
Consol. letter money	36,000	39,000	39,000	42,000	156,000	
— duties on salt	97,761 14 11	82,466 17 3	97,644 3 5	110,488 17 5½	388,361 13 ½	
Seizures since 25 October 1760 —	10,501 15 8	1,331	160 15 9	10,523 8 7½	30,817 ½	
Profers — do.	7 7 9	30 10 2	72 10	105 6 8	615 14 7	
Letter money do.	59,029 18 1	61,000	63,000	86,000	269,029 18 1	
Alum mines do.	—	480	—	480	960	
Rent of a light house ditto —	—	—	—	—	—	
Alienation duty do.	—	6 13 4	—	—	6 13 4	
Composition do.	—	—	1,924 8 8	—	1,924 8 8	
6d. per lib. on pensions	12,626	7,000	7,000	15,000	41,626	
1s. per lib. on do.	12,754 12 0½	6,537 11 0½	5,698 14 4	7,000	31,990 17 5	

An ACCOUNT of the net produce of all the Permanent Taxes, in the Quarters ending the 5th of January, 5th of April, 5th of July, and the 10th of October, in the Year 1796.

	In the QUARTERS ending.				Total in the Year ending 10th October 1796.
	5th of January 1796	5th of April 1796	5th of July 1796	10th October 1796	
Houses windows 1766	117,338 10 6 $\frac{1}{4}$	58,325 17 1 $\frac{1}{4}$	113,166 3 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	42,675 4 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	331,505 15 6 $\frac{1}{2}$
Inhabited houses 1778	47,103 16 6	24,839 11 7 $\frac{1}{4}$	45,157 6 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	27,103 5	144,203 19 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Hawkers pedlars, 1710	400	150	1,159 18 10	1,040	2,749 18 10
Hackney coaches 1711	2,000	2,500	3,500	3,000	11,000
Ditto 1784 —	2,000	3,000	3,800	4,000	12,800
Male servants 1785	29,593 1 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	11,575 18 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	34,235 6 4	12,214 11 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	87,618 17 9 $\frac{1}{2}$
4-Wheel carriages do.	42,328 10 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	24,413 16 11 $\frac{1}{4}$	55,723 6 $\frac{1}{4}$	25,556 4 5 $\frac{1}{4}$	148,021 12 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
2-Wheel do. do.	9,078 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	6,805 7 11 $\frac{1}{4}$	16,527 17 1	4,043 8 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	36,455 8 $\frac{1}{2}$
Horses do. do.	40,926 6 2	12,778 3 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	44,390 3 1 $\frac{1}{4}$	12,765 9 $\frac{1}{2}$	110,860 1 11 $\frac{1}{4}$
First fruits —	—	—	4,305 14 1 $\frac{1}{4}$	—	4,305 14 1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Tenths —	—	—	9,959 3 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	—	9,959 3 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Arrears duties repealed	521 9 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	123 2 10 $\frac{1}{2}$.3 8 3	258 16 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	926 16 10 $\frac{1}{2}$
	519,971 12 11 $\frac{3}{4}$	342,365 7 $\frac{1}{4}$	555,148 19 9 $\frac{3}{4}$	404,254 15 10	1,821,740 15 8 $\frac{1}{4}$
DUTIES Anno 1791.					
Sugars —	83,913 1 6	6,744 16 11 $\frac{1}{2}$	8,244 16 4	97,469 4 9 $\frac{1}{2}$	196,371 19 7
British spirits —	16,352	33,615	43,322	25,754	119,043
Foreign do. —	38,158	42,714	10,849	15,430	107,151
Bills and receipts —	27,537	41,277	36,317	61,778 8 10	166,909 8 10
Game duty —	5,115	7,475	2,061	1,372 9 2	16,023 9 2
10 per ct. on aff. taxes	37,504 6 9 $\frac{1}{2}$	12,541 13 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	32,304 17 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	12,064 7 8	94,415 5 2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Arrears of duty on malt	—	—	—	40 12	40 12
	208,579 8 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	144,367 10 5	133,098 13 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	213,909 2 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	699,954 14 9 $\frac{1}{2}$

£.

DUTIES Anno 1794.
 British spirits —
 Foreign do. —
 Spirit licences —
 Glass —
 Bricks & tiles (customs)
 Ditto (excise)
 Paper (customs) —
 Ditto (excise) —
 Slates and stones —
 Attornies articles —

17,957	38,236	43,291	26,725	126,207
37,528	44,094	12,062	18,049	111,733
19,300	15,000	39,000	17,000	90,000
15,033	12,243	11,170	8,146	46,592
11 14 6	100 9 8	10 6	200	322 10 2
28,009	6,690	829	18,751	54,279
186 10 8	1,000 13 4	725 3 9	2,200	4,112 7 9
32,107	40,151	24,966	40,772	137,990
2,284 12 5	703 2 2	2,467 10 1½	3,753 19 1½	9,209 3 10½
2,826	4,794	4,218	4,357 13 6	16,195 13 6
154,942 17 7	163,012 5 2½	138,738 19 10½	139,954 12 7½	596,648 15 3½

DUTIES Anno 1795.
 British spirits —
 Foreign ditto —
 Wines —
 Tea —
 Cocoa and Coffee —
 Fruit, silk, &c. —
 Stamps —

—	507	35,406	27,864	63,777
—	110	12,551	15,415	28,076
—	13,332	221,808	356,736	591,876
—	—	28,885	52,859	81,744
—	674	5,219	3,593	9,486
—	—	84 11 5	20,101 15 8	20,186 7 1
—	—	—	8,713 15 8	8,713 15 8

An ACCOUNT of the net produce of all the Permanent Taxes, in the Quarters ending the 5th of January, 5th of April, 5th of July, and the 10th of October, in the Year 1795.

	In the QUARTERS ending.				Total in the Year ending 10th October 1795.
	5th January 1795.	5th April 1795.	5th of July 1795.	10th of August 1795	
Ship policies —	—	—	—	16,059 19	16,059 19
Hair powder certificates —	—	—	75,269	111,816 15	187,035 15
Sweets —	—	—	1,462	2,954	4,416
Receipts —	—	—	—	4,204	4,204
Coals —	—	—	—	71 14 2	71 14 2
DUTIES Anno 1796.					
Tobacco and snuffs		14,623	380,684 11 5	620,388 19 6	1,015,696 10 11
Salt —					
Horse-dealers licences					
Additional 10l. per cent					
Wines (customs)					
Ditto (excise)					
Sweets					
Legacies					
Horses					
2s. duty on ditto					
Hats					

An ACCOUNT of the net produce of all the Permanent Taxes, in the Quarters ending the 5th of January, 5th of April, 5th of July, and 10th of October, in the Years 1796.

	In the QUARTERS ending				Total in the Year ending 10th October 1796.	
	5th January 1796.	5th April 1796.	5th July 1796.	10th October 1796.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
CUSTOMS	£. s. d. 1,039,427 13 10 1/2	£. s. d. 759,357 2 5 1/2	£. s. d. 552,109 14 7 1/2	£. s. d. 881,451 6 2	3,232,345 17 1 1/2	
EXCISE	1,533,022 5 6 1/2	1,352,976 19 7 1/2	1,768,568 2 1 1/2	1,807,041 3 4	6,461,608 10 7 1/2	
STAMPS	262,253 2 8	288,726	291,120	372,318 7 6	1,212,669 7 6	
	2,834,703 2 1	2,401,060 2 0 1/2	2,611,797 16 8 1/2	3,060,810 17 0 1/2	10,906,623 15 3	
INCIDENTS.	£.					
Confol. letter money	39,000	39,000	39,000	39,000	156,000	
— duties on salt	93,644 15 5 1/2	116,798 3 10 1/2	88,665 14 1 1/2	89,383 17 8	391,492 11 1 1/2	
Seizures since 25th October 1796	2,000	1,459 13 6 8	2,610 8	263 16	6,333 17	
Prætors do.	33 14 5	6 8	583 7 9	13 9	641 12 3	
Letter money do.	60,000	77,000	86,000	88,000	311,000	
Alum mines do.	—	480	—	480	960	
Rent of a light house do.	—	—	6 13 4	—	6 13 4	
Alienation duty do.	—	—	—	—	—	
Compensation do.	—	11 1 1	1 16 8	3 4	2 13 4	
6d. per lib. on pensions	17,951	5,000	9,000	9,000	40,951	
1s. per lib. on do.	12,519 12 0 1/2	3,500	7,744 4 3 1/2	7,000	30,763 16 4	
Houses and windows since 10th October 1796	101,306 12 9 1/2	70,371 7	224,160 2 8	53,498 19 3 1/2	349,336 15 4 1/2	

An ACCOUNT of the net produce of all Permanent Taxes, in the Quarters ending the 5th of January, 5th of April, 5th of July, and 10th of October, in the Year 1796.

PARLIAMENTARY

[COMMONS.]

	In the Q. ARTERS ending:				Total in the Year ending 10th October 1796.
	5th January 1796.	5th April 1796.	5th July 1796.	10th October 1796	
Inhabited houses 1778	39,707 12 5½	20,136 11 9	52,642 8 2½	28,316 7 8½	140,803 2
Hawkers and pedlars, since 24 June 1710	1,000	800	2,080	530	4,410
Hackney coaches 1711	2,000	3,000	2,500	3,200	10,700
Ditto — 1784	2,000	4,000	3,000	3,700	12,700
Males servants 1785	29,049 18 1½	13,033 13 4½	38,422 19 2½	15,230 6 3½	95,736 16 9½
4-Wheel carriages do.	41,345 9 2½	27,401 4 6½	61,652 5 2½	31,328 8 6½	161,727 7 3½
2-Wheel do. do.	13,545 1 2½	5,344 2 2½	19,961 15 6½	2,770 5 10	41,621 4 9½
Horses do.	31,923 17 9½	16,767 5 1	52,464 6 5½	19,655 19	120,811 8 3½
Firstfruits —	—	—	3,771 11 5	—	3,771 11 5
Tenths —	—	—	9,938 14 9½	—	9,938 14 3½
Arrears of duties repeal.	—	—	34 10 4	1,960 7 10	1,994 18 2
	490,027 19 11½	404,103 2 2	604,240 17 3½	393,332 6½	1,891,703 19 11½
DUTIES Anno 1791					
Sugars —	94,473 2 7	5,686 18 9½	13,000	81,310 7 5½	194,470 8 10
British spirits —	1,064	12,239	3,202	1,623	18,128
Foreign do. —	29,637	26,886	31,470	35,725	123,718
Bills and receipts	32,871	42,713	40,976	60,611 3 9	177,171 3 9
Game duty —	5,587	6,644	985	2,272 1 4	15,488 1 4
10 per ct. on affect. taxes	26,296 19 ½	10,771 1 0½	33,347 7 5½	15,708 4 9½	86,123 12 4
	189,929 1 7½	104,939 19 10	122,980 7 5½	197,249 17 4	615,099 6 3

An ACCOUNT of the net produce of all the Permanent Taxes, in the Quarters ending the 5th of January, 5th of April, 5th of July, and 10th of October, in the Year 1796.

	In the QUARTERS ending.				Total in the Year ending 10th October 1796.	
	5th January 1796.	5th April 1796.	5th July 1796.	10th October 1796.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
DUTIES Anno 1796.	£.	£.	£.	£.	£.	£.
Tobacco and snuffs	—	40,338	39,093	39,947	119,378	—
Salt	—	8,000	8,000	8,000	24,000	—
Hofe dealers licences	—	240	157	192	589	12
Additional 10l. per cent	—	—	17,105	3,250	20,355	—
Wines (customs)	—	—	—	44,270	44,270	3 1½
Ditto (excise)	—	—	—	851	851	—
Sweets	—	—	—	1,340	1,340	—
Legacies	—	—	—	1,894	1,894	—
Horses	—	—	—	400	400	—
2s. duty on do.	—	—	—	1,300	1,300	—
Hats	—	—	—	1,395	1,395	—
£.	—	48,578	64,355	102,839	215,772	15 1½

An ACCOUNT of the net produce of all the Permanent Taxes, in the Quarters ending the 5th of January,
 5th of April, 5th of July, and 10th of October, in the Years 1795 and 1796 respectively.

	In the YEAR ending 10th Oct. 1795.			In the YEAR ending 10th Oct. 1796.		
TOTAL of CUSTOMS - - -	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
— of EXCISE - - -	3,157,645	11	4½	3,232,345	17	1½
— of STAMPS - - -	7,166,635	11	9¾	6,461,608	10	7½
— of INCIDENTS - - -	1,207,551	12	7	1,212,669	7	6
— of DUTIES 1791 - - -	1,821,740	15	8¼	1,891,703	19	11½
— of DUTIES 1794 - - -	699,954	14	9½	615,099	6	3
— of DUTIES 1795 - - -	596,648	15	3½	500,802	1	3
— of DUTIES 1796 - - -	1,015,696	10	11	1,372,366	18	10
— of DUTIES 1796 - - -	15,665,873	12	5½	15,286,596	1	6½
	—	—	—	215,772	15	1½

Exchequer, the 17th Day of October, 1796.

JAMES FISHER:

Wednesday, 12th October.

A petition, complaining of an undue return from the town of Canterbury, was presented, and ordered for consideration the 29th of November next.

A petition from Peter Moore and Philip Francis, Esqrs. complaining of an undue return from Tewkesbury, was presented, and ordered for consideration the first of December next.

Mr. ROSE moved that an account of all the Exchequer bills, issued in pursuance of three acts of Parliament passed last session, be laid before the House.—Agreed to

Thursday, 13th October.

Mr. Serjeant ADAIR gave notice, that on Monday next he would move for leave to bring in a bill similar to that which passed through the House last year, and which was stopped by the Lords, because it was presented at a period of the Session when there was not time for discussing its merits. The object of the bill was to make some regulations respecting the obligation of the Quakers to pay tithes, and to make their affirmation in courts of justice, evidence in criminal as well as in civil cases.

A petition was presented from Sir John Henderson, of Fordell, complaining of an undue election for the borough of Stirling, &c. which was ordered to be taken into consideration on Tuesday, the 6th of December.

Friday, 14th October.

A second petition was presented, complaining of an undue election for the borough of Downton, in the county of Wilts. Ordered to be taken into consideration on the day appointed for the former petition.

The SECRETARY AT WAR laid before the House a variety of army estimates, which he moved to be taken into consideration in a committee of supply this day se'nnight.

Mr. BROUGHTON moved for an account of the revenue and charges of the East-India Company for the years 1795; 1796; an account of their stock and capital; an account of their sales of goods for the same period; an account of the amount of the sale of goods, with the rate of freight and private profit, and from the year 1793.

The House resolved itself into a committee of supply.

Mr. PYBUS said, that however anxious they all might be that the negotiations which had been opened might terminate in an ho-

nourable peace, the committee would still perceive the necessity of placing our means of defence in the most respectable posture, and preparing the country for either alternative. He therefore entertained full confidence that the resolutions he had to propose would meet with no opposition. He then moved "that one hundred and twenty thousand men should be employed for the service of the navy for the year 1797, including 20,000 marines, and that 4l. per month for 13 months, should be granted for each man."

General TARLETON said he did not rise to object to the vote then before the Committee; nor had he any intention in the remotest degree, to depreciate the services of our gallant naval officers and hardy seamen. He had heard and read of their achievements throughout the war, with as much pleasure as any Englishman whatever. And in the skill and bravery of our navy, he conceived Great Britain would always find the best defence and safeguard against the external enemies; but as the representative of one of the greatest commercial towns in Europe, he esteemed it to be his duty to place before the Committee, a few observations on two material and interesting subjects. His Majesty's speech had informed the House that the fleets of the enemy had for the greater part of the year been blocked up in their own ports; alluding to that part of the speech, and conscious of the immense naval force possessed by this country, he wished to know why the squadron of Admiral Richery had been suffered to move from Cadiz. The equivocal situation of Spain might perhaps account for this. If the British Admiral, who was cruising off Cadiz, had received instructions to leave his station, or thought it his duty to do so, that was a sufficient reason. But there was another point upon which some direct information from His Majesty's Ministers appeared to him to be necessary. Every person was acquainted with the sailing of Admiral Richery's fleet—every person had heard of its arrival and operations at Newfoundland—he wished to have some official detail upon the subject. Another report had been circulated within these two days of a more disagreeable nature. Several of the ships (six or seven) of the Quebec fleet had been captured. This was an event of much consequence; the House were aware that a second convoy was expected from Quebec; under all these circumstances, he wished to know if ministers had provided against offensive operations in Newfoundland, or if they thought the season was drawing nigh that would drive the enemy from the coast;—on this subject he wished to receive some official information.

Mr. PYBUS said, that Government had certainly received official accounts that the enemy had landed and committed a certain

degree of damage upon the coast of Newfoundland ; but they had also reason to believe that they had now retired from that quarter.

The two resolutions were then put and carried, and the House being resumed, the report was ordered to be received on Monday.

Monday, 17th October.

A petition was presented by the unsuccessful candidate for the borough of Malmesbury, and another on the part of the electors, complaining of an undue election for that borough. Both petitions were ordered to be taken into consideration on Tuesday the 1st of November.

Mr. Chancellor PITT observed, that it appeared to him to be necessary that some measure of regulation should be adopted relative to petitions presented to the House, complaining of undue returns at elections, and that he should have to propose something to that effect to-morrow.

Mr. Serjeant ADAIR said, he rose in consequence of the notice he had the honour two days ago to give the House, for the purpose of moving for leave to bring in a bill for the relief of that respectable body of people the Quakers. His motives for this proceeding he would state as shortly as possible, as well as the reasons which induced him to bring forward the business in the last Parliament. He entertained no doubt but that the opinion of the present Parliament upon the subject would entirely coincide with that of the last. He was sure that in the last Parliament, the principles on which the bill was framed, were such as gave universal satisfaction. The object of the bill which he wished to pass into a law, was two-fold :—First, to grant relief to the Quakers, with regard to the imprisonment of their persons for non-payment of tythes ; and in the next place, to render their affirmation evidence, in criminal as well as in civil cases in courts of justice. Nothing, he said, could be more congenial to the principles of justice, than to extend that relief, which the bill intended, to a body of men, who were universally and justly allowed to be as unoffending and as obedient to the laws as any set of men in the country ; and certain he was, however we might differ from them on account of their religious scruples, that the House, actuated by the principles and love of liberty, would be ever ready to give way to the scruples of persons upon matters of religion or conscience, and while they were satisfied that these scruples were sincere, would treat them with respect and indulgence.

The legislature had formerly granted indulgencies to the Quakers respecting the payment of tithes. They considered the payment of

tythes, in a certain form, as contrary to the divine law, and therefore thought they ought not to obey a human law, if it appeared to them contrary to the divine one. That they were sincere in that opinion was evinced by its having been productive of many temporary inconveniences to them, having subjected some of them to perpetual imprisonment, which they suffered in silence, rather than give up their scruples. Under these circumstances, the legislature had taken the subject into consideration, and accordingly we find, that in the 7th and the 8th of King William it was provided, that where the payment of tythes did not exceed 10l. a remedy was given to the Quakers in a certain manner there described; experience had shewn the wisdom of that measure. It was his object now to make the principle of that measure more extensive in its effect. The Quakers did not object to the payment of tythes, provided they were not made active in their obedience to the law, by which tythes were claimed of them, but their scruples of conscience led them to think it a breach of the divine law for them to be active in their obedience to a civil institution, which they considered as repugnant to divine authority; and as our law now stood, the process might be such as to compel them to be thus active against their conscience, they therefore were subject to perpetual imprisonment when an attachment was issued against their persons for the non-payment of tythes. To this perpetual imprisonment (although they possessed the means) they had submitted, rather than be active in the payment of tythes, because they thought, that by being so, they offended against the divine will. It was with a view of relieving these conscientious men that he brought in the bill which passed that House in the last Parliament; and which it was his object now to renew. In the reign of George I. there was a measure similar to this introduced, but as it did not go beyond the sum of 10l. it had been found inadequate to the grievance which it was its object to redress. It was his intention, in the measure he was about to bring forward, to adopt the principle of that bill, to conform to its provisions, and to give additional power as to the means of obtaining costs. The measure which he was proposing, had nothing new in its nature; it was only enlarging the amount of the sum for which the remedy was already provided: but although he wished to relieve the Quakers from the hardships they suffered, yet he had no view of doing so without a due regard also to the interest of the clergy who were entitled to tythes; on the contrary, the measure he was about to propose would facilitate the recovery of their demands, for as the law now stands the clergyman loses his profits when the Quakers submit to perpetual imprisonment.

In cases of much legal difficulty, such as mortgages, &c. he should propose the question to be referred to superior courts, since gentlemen in the commission of the peace, however well qualified to perform their duty, could not be expected to understand all the intricacies of such points. The bill therefore which he proposed to bring in should have some provisions upon that head; but, if it should appear that the party prosecuting his claim, had had recourse to the higher authority when the inferior jurisdiction was competent to decide it, then such party should have no more costs than if he had pursued his remedy in the inferior and ordinary way.

These were the outlines of the bill which he proposed to introduce, a measure which had the double aspect of relieving the Quaker and securing the property of the ministers of our established church.

There was another point, however, to be considered, a provision which respected the administration of justice, as it regarded the evidence to be received in our courts of law, in matters of criminal jurisdiction.—He intended to introduce into the bill he was now about to propose what was inserted in the former bill. Experience had shewn the expediency of receiving the affirmation of Quakers in civil cases. In criminal cases the judges had often seen and lamented (as he had himself in a great criminal court) the mischief that arose from excluding the crown and the public from the benefit of the affirmation of the Quakers; and therefore he should propose the taking the affirmations of Quakers in criminal as well as in civil cases, as evidence in courts of law. This was analogous to the principle which had guided our courts in their proceedings upon evidence. Nor had he any doubt that if the courts had not considered the statute which made the affirmation of a Quaker admissible evidence in civil cases, a restriction in a criminal case, the judges would all (he certainly should himself) have taken the affirmation of a Quaker in all cases like an oath. For they had taken the oaths of persons of persuasions different from our own. The bill should therefore enact, that the affirmation of Quakers should be taken in criminal cases. When he stated this, he knew there were many of the Quakers who did not wish it; he believed there were many of them who would not like to see that provision in the bill; but he should do it, because he thought it was a provision which the administration of justice called for; as he had known many who were guilty of the most atrocious offences escape punishment on account of this deficiency in the admissibility of evidence.

He should trespass no farther upon the House than to say, that

if leave be given to bring in the bill, gentlemen would take an opportunity of discussing it in its various stages. There were parts of it which could be better discussed in a Committee than in any other stage of it; he should, if permitted, bring it in precisely in the form in which it passed that House in the last Parliament. Gentlemen might of course propose what amendment they should think fit in the Committee. He did not indeed pledge himself not to propose some amendments in it himself. Perhaps he might be of opinion that the amendments that were adopted by the House in the former bill ought to be left out. Without pledging himself, therefore, to adhere to every clause in the bill which he had the honour to propose, he moved "That leave be given to bring in a bill for the farther relief of the people called Quakers, as to the imprisonment of their persons for the non-payment of tythes; and for making their solemn affirmation evidence in criminal as well as civil cases." *Granted.*

Tuesday, 18th October.

A petition was presented from Edward Knuble, Esq. and Sir James Graham, complaining of an undue election for Carlisle, which was ordered to be taken into consideration on Thursday the 8th of December.

Also, a petition from ——— Shipley, Esq. against the election at Colchester, which was referred for consideration to Tuesday the 13th of December.

Likewise a petition from John Hill, Esq. against the Shrewsbury election, to be considered on Thursday the 15th of December.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS brought up the additional articles of the Treaty of Navigation and Commerce between Great Britain and the United States of America, as ratified at London and Philadelphia, which were ordered to lie upon the table.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that as it would certainly be satisfactory to all the parties concerned in controverted elections that they should be decided as soon as possible, he had yesterday given notice that he would on this day suggest some regulations, in order to bring them to the speediest possible termination. It was impossible for him to extend these regulations to all the petitions, because there were still two days open for their reception, and he did not know how many in the course of that time might be presented. But as there had been twelve petitions presented already, he conceived that six of these might be decided before the Christmas holidays, without interfering with other matters of important dis-

cussion, which would certainly occupy a considerable share of the attention of the House. With respect to the rest he hoped that they would be heard as soon as possible after the Christmas recess, and that this Parliament would set an example of dispatch in business, upon which the character and dignity of the House so much depended, and that they would incontestably prove the beneficial tendency of the bill lately passed upon the subject, by settling every controverted election in the course of the present session.

The order of the day being read, and the House having resolved itself into a Committee to consider the clause of His Majesty's speech respecting an invasion—that paragraph of the speech was read as follows :

“ You will feel this peculiarly necessary at a moment when the
“ enemy has openly manifested the intention of attempting a de-
“ scent on these kingdoms. It cannot be doubted what would
“ be the issue of such an enterprise ; but it befits your wisdom
“ to neglect no precautions that may either preclude the attempt,
“ or secure the speediest means of turning it to the confusion and
“ ruin of the enemy.”

Mr. Chancellor PITT. After the unanimous vote which the House gave upon the first day of the session, and their general concurrence in that part of the Address which respects a foreign invasion, it would be doing injustice to the feelings which were then expressed, were I to make any apology for calling their attention to the subject on the present occasion. I shall not detain them therefore a single moment in shewing the propriety of laying before them at so early a period the measures which I mean this day to propose. It is equally our duty and our interest by every means in our power, and by every exertion of which we are capable, if possible in the language of the Address, to preclude the attempt, and at the same time to take such measures of defence as shall cause the invasion, if it should be attempted, to issue in the confusion and ruin of the enemy. I shall not at present go much at large into the detail of preparations, but merely suggest a general outline of defence, which if it should be approved of by the Committee, may be particularly discussed when the bills are afterwards brought in upon the resolutions. The general considerations are few and obvious. The natural defence of this kingdom, in case of invasion, is certainly its naval force. This presents a formidable barrier in whatever point the enemy may direct their attack. In this department, however, little now remains to be done, our fleet at this moment being more respectable and more formidable than ever it was at any other period in the history of

the country. But strong and powerful, even as it at present is, it is capable of considerable increase, could an additional supply of seamen, or even landsmen, who in a very short time might be trained to an adequate knowledge of the naval service, be procured. For this purpose I would suggest a levy upon the different parishes throughout the kingdom, an expedient precisely similar to that which was practised with so much success nearly two years ago. This levy, however, I would not confine as a mode of supply for the sea service. It is certainly of the highest importance both for the internal defence of the country and the security of our foreign possessions, that all the old regiments should be compleat. But every one must be sensible, that from the numbers in those regiments who have fallen a sacrifice to sickness and the fortune of war, a more expeditious method must be adopted for their completion, than the ordinary mode of recruiting supplies, in order that the country may be able to avail itself of this arm of strength. I would propose, therefore, in the first place, a levy of fifteen thousand men from the different parishes for the sea service, and for recruiting the regiments of the line. The Committee, however, must be sensible when a plan of invasion is in agitation, a scheme which almost at another time would not have been conceived, and an attempt, which by any other enemy than that with whom we have now to contend, might have been justly deemed impracticable, that a more enlarged and a more expensive plan of prevention and of defence is necessary. In digesting this plan there are two considerations of which we ought not to lose sight. The first is the means (which must not be altogether new) of calling together a land force, sufficiently strong to frustrate the attempt, keeping our naval force entirely out of view; And secondly, to adopt such measures in raising this force as shall not materially interfere with the industry, the agriculture and the commerce of the country. It will be for the House to decide upon the degree to which the former consideration ought to be permitted to interfere with the latter. A primary object will be to raise, and gradually to train, such a force as may in a short time be fit for service. Of all the modes of attaining this object, there is none so expeditious, so effectual, and attended with so little expence, as that of raising a supplemental levy of militia, to be grafted upon the present establishment. I should propose that this supplement shall consist of sixty thousand men, not to be immediately called out, but to be enrolled, officered and gradually trained, so as to be fit for service at a time of danger. The best mode of training them without withdrawing too many at one time from their regular pursuits,

will be to embody one sixth part in regular succession, each to be trained for twenty days, in the course of which they may become tolerable proficient in the military exercise. With respect to the mode of conducting the levy, the returns that have been lately made from the different counties shew the present levies to be extremely disproportioned, and that the clause in the act which provides against this abuse has never been executed. Accordingly we find that in some counties the proportion is one out of seven, and in others one out of three. It will be expedient therefore to regulate the future levy, not by the proportions now existing, but by a general estimate of the inhabitants who are able to bear arms. The next consideration which merits attention, is the manner in which the troops are to be furnished, which I think ought to be generally from all parts of the kingdom, and that an obligation be imposed upon those who are balloted either to serve in person, or to provide a substitute; and the better to preserve the general proportion, that this substitute be provided either from the parish in which the person balloted resides, or from a parish immediately adjoining. It will be proper also to remove the present exemption from those who have more than one child, on the express condition that they shall not be called upon to serve out of the parish in which they live. The mode of training only one sixth part of the whole, twenty days in succession, as it will only withdraw ten thousand at a time from their usual occupations, consequently will not much infringe upon the general order of the community. Of course they must be provided with some sort of uniform, but it will be of the coarsest kind, and such as may be purchased at a small expence. A sufficient number of arms will also be in readiness for supplying each man in the moment of danger. Another measure which I would suggest to the Committee, is to provide a considerable force of irregular cavalry. The regular cavalry on the present establishment is certainly by no means inconsiderable, and the yeomanry cavalry, which from their numbers are sufficiently respectable, we have found to be highly useful in securing the quiet and maintaining the internal tranquillity of the country. But with a view to repelling an invasion, the more that this species of force is extended the greater advantage is likely to accrue from it, as an invading enemy, who must be destitute of horses, can have no means to meet it upon equal terms. Besides, it is a species of force which may be provided in a mode that will be attended with almost no expence to the public, and with little hardship to individuals. In order to calculate the extent to which these irregular

cavalry may be raised, it is necessary to estimate the number of horses which are kept for pleasure throughout the kingdom, and by raising the levy in this proportion we shall have the satisfaction to think that it will only fall upon those who have a considerable stake to defend. By the produce of the tax, which is as good a criterion as any, of the number of horses kept for pleasure, we find that in Scotland, England and Wales, they amount to about two hundred thousand, one hundred and twenty thousand of which belong to persons who keep only one horse of the kind, the rest to persons, some of whom keep ten, and various other proportions. It certainly would not be a very severe regulation when compared with the object meant to be accomplished, to require one tenth of these horses for the public service. I would therefore propose that every person who keeps ten horses shall be obliged to furnish one horse and a horseman to serve in a corps of cavalry—that every person who keeps more than ten horses, and a number falling short of twenty, after furnishing a horse and horseman, for the first ten, shall subscribe a proportionate sum for the rest, which shall be applied to defray the general expence—that those who keep twenty shall furnish two, three of thirty, &c. and that those who keep fewer than ten shall form themselves into a class, when it shall be decided by ballot who at the common expence shall furnish the horse and the horseman. These troops thus raised will be provided with uniform and accoutrements, formed into corps, and put under proper officers. And surely when the means are compared with the object to be attained and the expence to which individuals will be subjected, with the security of the property which they possess, no one will complain that that end or that security is purchased at too dear a price. There is still another resource which, though it may not appear so serious as those which have been already mentioned, ought not to be neglected. Upon the supposition of an invasion, it would certainly be of no small importance to form bodies of men, who from their dexterity in using fire-arms, might be highly useful in harassing the operations of the enemy. It may easily be perceived that I here allude to gamekeepers and persons of such a description whose services in this emergency might be extremely valuable. I am aware that there are great numbers of depute gamekeepers, who might consider it as exceedingly hard to be included under such an obligation. I would propose therefore that every depute gamekeeper who does not chuse to serve in person, shall provide a person equally or nearly equally dexterous in the use of fire-arms with himself; and that every depute gamekeeper who does not chuse

to serve in person or to provide a substitute, shall have a certain time allowed him to return his licence ; but if he retains it after that period, he shall be obliged to comply with the regulation. I do not conceive that I form an exaggerated estimate, when I suppose that there are about seven thousand persons in the kingdom fit for being formed into a corps of excellent marksmen, and with whatever levity this proposition may be treated, I am confident it is by no means unworthy of attention at a time, when we are occupied in contriving the best means of internal defence, and of converting a hostile invasion to the ruin and confusion of the invaders. I have now stated the general outline of the plan ; it will, perhaps, be better to postpone the discussion of its particular merits till we see the details in the bills which will be afterwards brought in, if the resolutions which I shall have the honour to propose meet the approbation of the Committee. Upon the whole, then the amount of the force will be fifteen thousand men for the service of the navy and for recruiting the regiments of the line, sixty thousand supplemental militia, nearly twenty thousand irregular cavalry, (I say nearly, for there will be various deductions to be made, such as those, perhaps, who have the charge of a parish, and those who have horses already serving in the yeomanry cavalry, and seven thousand marksmen. If the Committee shall think proper to approve the resolutions, I shall bring in the bills as soon as possible, and allow a week for considering them. The Committee, however, must be sensible that the measures ought to be adopted as speedily as possible ; for every hour of additional delay is fraught with additional information to the enemy, and every additional notice to the enemy is accompanied with additional danger to ourselves. He concluded with moving the first of a series of resolutions, embracing the different objects mentioned in his speech, as follows :

“ That leave be given to bring in a bill to raise a certain number of men in the several counties of England, and from the different shires, stewarties, towns, and boroughs of Scotland, for the service of His Majesty’s army and navy.”

Mr. SHERIDAN. In two points I am happy to agree with the right honourable gentleman, namely, that it will be a fitter opportunity for discussing the merits of the plan which he has suggested to the Committee after the bills are introduced, and that the scheme of preparation which he has now opened is nothing more than following up the vote of the House on the first day of the Session. I must confess, however, I expected that the right honourable gentleman would have accompanied his statement of defensive

operations with some explanation of the reasons why it is necessary to take any such measures at all. The plan which he has in view, if put in execution, will certainly impose additional burdens upon the people, and considerably subtract from the industry of the nation, in which its greatest riches consist. And before proposing a plan which inevitably has this tendency, it certainly is no unreasonable expectation that its necessity should have been evinced. I am aware that it would be improper to demand much precision of explanation upon the subject, but because it would not have been consistent with his duty to give a particular disclosure of circumstances, surely that was no reason why he should have left the necessity of the formidable arrangements which he has proposed upon the vague and indefinite basis on which they at present rest. And if this House of Commons is not disposed to follow the example of the last Parliament, to sacrifice the rights of the people to the regal prerogative, and to surrender with the blindness of implicit confidence the direction of public affairs to the Ministers of the Crown, I trust that as there are more new Members in this than in any former Parliament, (a circumstance which of itself is certainly pleasing intelligence to the public), they at least will think it a duty they owe to their constituents to demand some farther satisfaction upon the subject, before they give an unqualified assent to a project so new and unprecedented. There is something extremely peculiar in the mode of announcing the attempt in His Majesty's speech, which I have certainly a right to consider as the speech of the Minister. The words "manifested the intention," are vague and indefinite, and I could wish that by some more express communication they would attach to themselves a greater share of responsibility for the measures in contemplation, than can result from the cautious terms in which His Majesty's speech is couched.

I wish to be informed whether they know any thing of what is passing in France, or whether any preparations have been making for such an attempt? I am sure if they are entirely ignorant of this, the secret-service money voted by Parliament must have been grossly misapplied. If they have taken the alarm merely from the blustering speeches of French generals, or some threatening rhodomontade which has passed in their councils, it has certainly been most groundlessly conceived. Were an invasion to be attempted by the enemy, there is no man more sanguine than I am, in thinking that the issue of such an attempt would be highly honourable to the patriotism and the courage of the inhabitants of this country. Any doubt that it would have a contrary issue is, in my opinion, worthy of being treated only with contempt; and if the Govern-

ment of France can be at all influenced by the idea of receiving assistance from the people of England, they are unfit to conduct the affairs of a great nation. Such pitiful succour as they would find in this island, if there are any individuals of character so depraved, and feelings so degenerate as to join their standard, would, I am sure, rather impede than forward their progress. I cannot boast of possessing that military ardour, that chivalry of patriotism which I have heard has been displayed at some meetings in the city, where a wish has been expressed, that 3 or 400,000 Frenchmen might land here, merely to give them an opportunity of exercising their prowess in slaughtering them, but I have no doubt that ruin and confusion will be the fate of those who may be hardy enough to undertake such an enterprize. I agree with the right honourable gentleman in all his statements of the necessity and propriety of adopting measures of prevention and defence, if the enemy's intention be such as to warrant them. I give this qualified assent to the measures which he proposes to adopt, because I profess to have no confidence whatever in the Minister. Those who implicitly confide in his judgment and sincerity will be disposed to give him credit for the necessity of the steps which he is about to take. Those who, with me, were witnesses of their conduct during last Parliament, have so often seen the present Ministers raising alarms in the country when no danger existed, merely to enlarge their own power, and to frighten the people into a hasty concurrence with their unprincipled schemes of aggrandisement, that it cannot be surprising to them if I suspect their integrity on the present occasion. I do not ask precise information from them respecting the state of France, but I wish to know, whether they are advised that there are ships collected at the different ports of the French coast, apparently for no other purpose than that of being employed as instrumental in invading this country? If their alarm is taken up on no other foundation than the empty rhodomontade of speeches, all preparation to resist an attempt which only exists in the distempered brain of a feverish orator, is absurd and ridiculous. The idea of invasion is by no means new. We have heard in this country of a project of invading France, and the march of our army to Paris was to consummate the triumphs of the first campaign of the war. This was not lightly talked of, it was gravely stated in the gravest of all assemblies, a British House of Commons, by no obscure person, but by gentlemen of great weight, and very nearly connected with the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt), and at the time was much applauded by a great majority of the House. One of the gentlemen who proposed this daring line of operation, in the enthu-

faith of the idea, entered the army, got the command of a regiment, and thus manifested the sincerity of his intentions. But we never heard that the Government of France had taken any steps to repel the threatened danger. I will not disguise my opinion that this note of preparation is founded for a purpose very different from that which has been this day professed. We have heard that the French armies have been completely defeated and even annihilated in Germany, and except, like the frogs in the marsh, who were afraid of being attacked by the conquered bull, Ministers suppose that the French, after being routed by the Emperor, are to come over and attack us, it is difficult to reconcile their present alarm with their other representations. But supposing that the French really intend to make an invasion upon this country, what is the natural inference that they will draw from the resolutions which have been opened, and one of which has been proposed for the approbation of the Committee? Do we not allow that the country is not at present prepared to repel any attack that may be made against it? In the last Parliament, a right honourable gentleman (Mr. Secretary Dundas) triumphantly announced, and at the time expressed his desire that all Europe might hear it, but lest even the Stentorian vigour of his lungs should not have carried the welcome intelligence to the ears of all the new members who now sit in the House, I shall re-state it—"That with the naval and military force which the nation could then command, we had nothing to dread from the united efforts of the combined powers of Europe. Such was the unexampled strength of our navy, and such the courage and loyalty of our regular troops, aided by the zeal and intrepidity of a vast establishment of fencible and volunteer corps, that there was no possible danger to which we could be exposed, whether from our foreign or domestic enemies, that we might not encounter with the most confident assurance of success." If the martial ardour then testified by volunteer associations, was not a mere spurt of loyalty, and if the persons who composed these corps had enrolled themselves not from motives of interest or of vanity, but from patriotism and devotion to their country, why repose so little confidence in their exertions, or distrust their fidelity to a cause to which they are pledged by their honour as well as by their interest? I am afraid that the resolutions now proposed are calculated rather to invite than to prevent an invasion—that they tend to frighten this country, but not to frighten France. They proclaim to the enemy that till the new force which it is proposed to collect and to train is brought into action, that we are not in a proper state of defence, and thus point out the intermediate time as the proper

period for making a successful attempt. But I am persuaded, as I have already said, that the plan now in agitation points to a very different object from that which is professed; that it is in the contemplation of His Majesty's Ministers to prolong the shocking and inhuman species of warfare, with a view of extending our possessions in the West Indies, and that it is for this purpose that Parliament are called upon to sanction those measures which it is pretended are dictated by the imperious necessity of the times, and indispensably required for the safety and security of the country. I do not find myself called upon to oppose the resolutions; on the contrary, if they are necessary, let them be adopted by all means.— I wish only to have some farther explanation, and to be informed whether the danger of an invasion is such as to require these measures of prevention, or whether the real object of all the preparations is not the extension of our colonial possessions in the West Indies? Some of the expedients suggested by the right honourable gentleman, it was impossible to hear without a smile. We are called upon to raise a great cavalry force for a very curious reason, because the enemy cannot easily import cavalry into the country; as well, supposing them to attack us only with cavalry, might it be said, that we ought only to have infantry to oppose to them. I have no objection to club for a horse, or to exercise in Hyde Park, and I dare say the right honourable gentlemen is very well acquainted with the maxim of ride and tie. I must confess, however, I cannot easily perceive the propriety of enlisting a corps of gamekeepers, as if a game-keeper only had the heart to be a soldier. Besides, this class of men are by no means the most dexterous in the use of fire-arms. The squires with more propriety ought to be selected. I am sure I know many gentlemen who are infinitely more expert shooters than their gamekeepers. Neither am I fond of the posthumous *ex post facto* reflection which is thrown upon the depute gamekeepers. But without at all entering into the detail of the intended operations, if the right honourable gentleman is really in possession of grounds of serious alarm, and if the present force of the country is insufficient to avert, or to repel the danger, in the choice of difficulties, I shall give my assent to the resolutions.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS. I should have considered it unnecessary for me to say any thing upon the present occasion, had it not been for the explanation which the honourable gentleman has thought proper to demand from Ministers. The honourable gentleman wishes some explanation from Ministers, the effect of which demand, however, another part of his speech wholly supercedes. He

calls for some information upon the subject of the invasion which has been announced by the enemy in addition to what His Majesty's speech contains, while at the same time he professes that he can place no confidence in their assurances. The honourable gentleman hopes too that the present Parliament will not imitate the conduct pursued by that by which it was preceded. With regard to the present Parliament, it must speak for itself. Those, however, who witnessed the public-spirited acts of the last Parliament ; its glorious exertions, by which this country and Europe had been rescued from destruction, must entertain the highest sentiments of respect for that Parliament, and rank it with the most venerated Parliaments this country had ever known. Those who, with me, cherish these sentiments, I hope will one day endeavour to raise a substantial monument of the respect in which we hold that Parliament. I hope, however, that this Parliament will not take upon credit the account which the honourable gentleman is pleased to give. He imputes to me expressions which I do not recollect ever to have uttered. Though there is no person who is less qualified to repeat particular expressions than I am, or whose words merit less to be recorded, I am sure the honourable gentleman never heard me express with regard to the internal state of the country, any other sentiment than that measures should go hand in hand with the emergencies which called for them. Ministers have already stated, with all the responsibility which can attach to them, that a design had manifested itself in the enemy to invade this country, and I conceive that they would have been wanting in their duty to the public had they failed to call upon the force of the State to avert the danger or to disappoint the attempt. Whether the preparations that have been made will end in a descent upon this country it is impossible to decide. There are appearances of a disposition to make the attempt, which is sufficient to justify Ministers for wishing to put the State in a posture of defence. I will not take upon me to determine whether the resolution of the enemy will be changed by the events which have lately taken place upon the continent, but I shall only say, that seeing what the enemy have already done, and the preparations they have made, it is prudent to adopt precautions, nor would Ministers perform their duty if they neglected them. For my own part I have no hesitation in giving it as my private opinion, that upon these means depends whether the projected invasion will be carried into execution. By shewing that every thing has been done to secure our internal safety, we demonstrate to the enemy the ruin with which their enterprise must be attended, and induce them to abandon a design which presents no

hope of success. Farther than this I cannot say, nor can I give any other information than that which has been communicated. The honourable gentleman seems to imagine that the number of cavalry should be determined by placing horse to horse, and man to man, with the enemy ; but should the design of invasion be carried into execution, the cavalry, whether regular or irregular, would furnish the best means of harassing their march and impeding their progress ; nor would it make the smallest difference, though the enemy were provided with no cavalry at all, for in case of such an event, our great safety would consist in being able to oppose them in this manner. The honourable gentleman says, that military operations may be undertaken with the troops to be raised of a nature entirely different from the avowed purpose. If Ministers wished to undertake any military operations that were inconsistent with the interest of the nation, Parliament had the power to check their designs, and the honourable gentleman himself, if he could convince Parliament of the impropriety of the conduct of Administration, might oppose a barrier to the undertaking. It cannot be expected, however, that I should say any thing upon this point. If the present negotiation should be unsuccessful, gentlemen cannot mean to say that this country should be tied up from offensive operation, and in the event of the prosecution of the war, our defence at home may depend upon the ability we possess to attack the enemy abroad. I think it therefore of essential importance to augment our regular force for the defence of these kingdoms, and, if necessary, to carry on the military operations, that circumstances may dictate against an enemy that has evinced the disposition to destroy our commerce and to disturb our internal tranquillity.

Mr. FOX then spoke to the following effect : In this stage of this business it does not appear to me to be the duty of any man to make an opposition to the measure now proposed. But even in this stage of it I have no difficulty in saying, that from the sense I have of the general plan, there are many parts of it which no eloquence is likely to reconcile me at least to adopt. The right honourable gentleman who spoke last has been pleased to say in answer to the observations of my honourable friend, that although the French in case of an invasion may land no cavalry, yet it is proper that we should be provided with cavalry to oppose them. My honourable friend's observation did not call for this sort of answer. The right honourable gentleman observes, that at all events this country ought to make great preparations at home, and that he is satisfied, that if we should be under the necessity of going on with the war, these preparations may be very beneficial to us in many respects. I

object to the generality of this mode of speaking, because it conveys to us no specific information, and is likely, from being just in the abstract, to entrap some into an approbation of measures which may lead to consequences of which persons so approving are not aware. That if we are compelled to go on with war, great preparations will be necessary, is a truth which nobody disputes; but it is a truth which conveys to us no information. It is applicable to this war, was applicable to the last, and will be applicable to every war. The right honourable gentleman should have applied his reasoning a little more closely; he should have come to the proposition which is now before the House. The question is this:—is the proposition before us fit to be adopted under our present circumstances?—If it be, then I say, that, for any evidence that appears before us, it was fit in 1756, was fit in 1778, fit in 1794, and has always been fit in every period in which this country has been engaged in war. But, for the whole necessity of the measure, we have only the authority of the King's Ministers, on which I do not choose to rely. I should have been unwilling to rely, in the last war, on the authority of much better Ministers than the present, and to make that authority a foundation for such propositions as the present. It is not by the authority of Ministers, but by the striking exigency of a particular moment, that Parliament are justified in adopting particular and extraordinary measures. I beg the Committee will attend to this, and reflect on all that has been said upon it by the right honourable gentleman; they will then see that he has dealt in nothing but generality; which, if considered as proof, proves a great deal too much for the purpose of the right honourable gentleman, for it proves that this species of defence is applicable to this country in every war, since he has not distinguished the exigency of the present moment, from that of any other in which this country has had the misfortune to be engaged in war. This is one in addition to the very many instances which His Majesty's Ministers have given of their great eloquence in urging general arguments without any specific applicability, in which they are eminently skilful, when it is their object to take money from the people, and to increase the power of the Crown. The right honourable gentleman has thought fit to pronounce a panegyric on the last Parliament, and to recommend its conduct for the imitation of this. My opinion of the last Parliament is, that it has done more mischief to the real welfare of this country than any other that ever sat in it since a Parliament was ever known or recognized in England; at least since Parliament had any credit for attending to the interests of the people. To hold it up, therefore, as an object of imitation,

is enough to confound any man who feels for the principles of freedom; a Parliament which has done more to destroy every thing that is dear to us, than in better days would have entered into the mind of any Englishman to attempt, or ever to conceive. Shew me a Parliament, in consequence of whose proceedings the people have been drained so much, and from which they have had so little benefit! Shew me a Parliament since the year 1688, the æra of our revolution, that has diminished the rights, the best, the dearest rights of the people, so shamelessly, so wickedly, as the last Parliament have done!—Shew me a Parliament since that period that has so uniformly, so studiously sacrificed the liberty of the subject to increase the influence of Government, as the last Parliament has done! To make it the subject of panegyric—to state its proceedings to be such as to be worthy of imitation, is beyond endurance! Sir, I consider the last Parliament as a curse to this country:—the leading principle on which they acted was that which leads directly to complete despotism—unlimited confidence in the Ministers of the Crown—Shew me a Parliament since the revolution, that has given such a confidence, and look at the effect of such practice. This is the only war that has ever been conducted on the part of this country, in which there never has been one inquiry on the part of Parliament—You see to what state that has led you already—Should this Parliament be like the last (God in his mercy avert it), this country will soon be in a condition, in which it will be of little importance, whether they have a Parliament or not. But for the conduct of the last Parliament we should not have heard of the measure which is now proposed to us. I know I may be told that I often speak intemperately, and that I do so now, but I speak as I feel, and I think it is impossible for any man to feel more strongly than I do at the present situation of this country. Ministers tell us that the measure which they now propose is necessary to our safety. If it be so, it is their own conduct and the conduct of a confiding Parliament, which has brought us into that situation. And what is the measure which they now propose? Why it is, in its nature, a requisition: an imitation of the system of the French, against which so many vehement declamations were pronounced: against the principle, applying it to a settled state, justly; but as against the French, in their condition, in my opinion, improperly, or at least in too unqualified a manner. Ministers now tell us, however, that our situation is such as to call for this measure. Granting it to be so for the sake of the argument only, I would then ask—What has brought us into that situation? To this I answer, without the least difficulty, the confidence, the cri-

minimal confidence, of the last Parliament. One inevitable effect of that confidence of Parliament in the Minister has been the want of the confidence of the people in the integrity of Parliament. The right honourable gentleman says, "it is good to be prepared." Certainly it is so—but when he comes to us, and makes this requisition, it is incumbent on him to shew us the reason why we should be thus prepared. He should lay before us the ground on which he calls for that requisition. How stood the case in former periods of this war? In 1794 there was as much reason for such a measure as there is now; there was then as much of a rumour of an invasion as there is now; and so the Ministers told us at that time. The House, upon the faith of the Ministers' assertions, agreed to measures of the most unconstitutional nature, to avert, as it was supposed, the impending danger. Such measures, although unconstitutional, were then thought to be necessary; and they were thought also to be sufficient to keep the French from attempting the desperate measure of an invasion. Are the French now more likely to make that desperate attempt than they were then? Or are we not now in a better situation than we were then? I conceive that Ministers themselves would answer these questions in a manner very consolatory to the people of this country. Such was our state in 1794. What is it now, and what the difference between the two situations? Ministers now tell us that an intention has been manifested on the part of the enemy to invade these kingdoms. I am too much accustomed to the artifice of Ministers to receive any very deep impression from what they say. Did they not say formerly what they say now, that the enemy had some intention of invading this country? Certainly they did, and they were entrusted with force sufficient to prevent that calamity.

But, says the right honourable gentleman who spoke last, "I am of opinion that, as it may be necessary for this country to carry on an offensive war, this measure may be of great advantage, inasmuch as we may thereby be the better able to avail ourselves of our forces." To this, as a general proposition, I do not object. It is true. But then I say to Ministers, "Bring before us the facts on which you say this measure is necessary. What I object to is your duplicity. If you really want this force, and to the extent you say you do, shew me the reason for it, and I will grant it cheerfully. All I want is, that you state to me the reasons. You did so when you called for the augmentation of the navy, and you had it; but do not ask any thing to carry on the war abroad under the mask of defending us at home; for in that case you are asking under a false title what under a real one the people of this

country would not grant to you ; for I know they will grant to you, to prevent an invasion at home, what they would refuse with indignation, if asked to carry on the war abroad." But, Sir, it seems we are to have the responsibility of Ministers for the due application of the grant which they now call for. Look at the extent to which the principle of voting such extraordinary measures as this, upon the idea of responsibility, may lead you. By it you will introduce a practice that must deprive the people of all their rights and all their property. If it should turn out (not an extravagant hypothesis) that all this story about an invasion is a mere pretence to gain the consent of the people to the measure now proposed, and that the real object is extremely different, what then will become of the boasted responsibility of Ministers ? How are we to make them responsible ? We may say, and say truly, that " the event has proved there was no danger of an invasion when this measure was adopted." To which the Ministers may answer, and be assured they will, " True, there was no invasion, but then it was owing to the very measures which we proposed, and you adopted, that the invasion was prevented." How, then, are we to make Ministers responsible for what they do under such a measure as this ? The idea of responsibility in such a case is perfectly ridiculous. Why, Sir, at this rate you may go on and do every thing that the Minister may ask you, until you have totally destroyed the Constitution ; the principles have already been too much invaded by the measures of the present Ministers. There are some inconveniences that necessarily arise out of a free Constitution. I know that many authors of great eminence have pointed out those inconveniences. I do not deny it, although I have never seen them in so strong a light as the authors I allude to say they did ; but the advantages resulting from a free Constitution are so great, so numerous, and to me so clear, that I cannot patiently argue upon them, when they are put in a scale against the supposed advantages of a contrary form. Be that as it may in the opinion of others, I say, you cannot argue that subject in this House ; for the people of this country have made their election : they have chosen a free government, and it is your duty to preserve it with all its inconveniences, if there be any that are worth mentioning. If, therefore, when Ministers pretend an alarm, you are to give them whatever power they may ask for, when it is impossible you can attach any responsibility to them, as I have proved already in this case you cannot, why then you desert the point on which the people of the country have already made their election ; and, instead of the blessings which your ancestors intended for you,

you take what may appear to you, but what never appeared to me, the advantages of despotism. This would be a fraud upon the people of this country. I know the eloquence that has often been employed to shew, or attempting to shew, by a flourishing antithesis that we possess all the advantages of a free government and those of a despotic monarchy, by possessing the wisdom which arises from a free discussion of the representatives of the people and the promptitude and dispatch of an unlimited monarchy. Such an antithesis may answer the purpose of an ingenious orator, and aid him in the course of a florid declamation; but it can avail but little to any man who wishes for the safety of our Constitution. I am of opinion, that our Constitution, in its true spirit, cannot mix with any thing despotic. Have recourse to experience, the only unerring guide; read the history of this country, and then shew me out of what page it is that you have discovered how and when it was that the maxims of a free government have been united with the principles of despotism. I know it cannot be done. I know also, that if you attend to history, and take it as a lesson, you will return to your ancient distrust and jealousy of Ministers whoever they may be, and that you will examine minutely into their conduct. Reflect on the consequences of the contrary practice. You see now before you the effect of it. Confidence, in the first instance, renders confidence necessary in the second. Confidence in Ministers induces them to take measures which they cannot continue without farther confidence; they are obliged to call for it in their own defence; in that career you may proceed until you have confided away the whole spirit of our Constitution. I am afraid you have advanced in that career much too far already. In my opinion the spirit of the Constitution has been almost entirely set at rest for a time, by the measures of the last Parliament. Let it be the practice, for it is the duty, of the present to revive it. There was an expression in the speech of the right honourable gentleman to which I cannot help alluding. He said, "if the present negotiation should be unsuccessful, then the present measure will be advantageous to this country." No man wishes more heartily than I do it may be successful. I wish it from every motive that can actuate a man; but I am not sure that the same feelings are entertained by his Majesty's Ministers. I hope they are. I say this by way of caution, lest the world should suppose I am such a devotee to the present Administration as to suppose that any negotiation in which they may fail may render peace to this country totally unattainable. Notwithstanding there are many new Members in this House, they know, I believe, enough of me and of

my opinion of this war to be well satisfied that I abhorred its commencement. That opinion remains completely unchanged ; and whatever opinion the people may have upon the propriety of the measure which is now proposed for the defence of this island from an invasion ; I trust this country will never relinquish the opinion that the war was in its principle and commencement unjust, unnecessary and diabolical. If it shall unhappily become our lot to defend ourselves against an invasion ; ourselves we must defend ; but whether the proposed measure is more or less than we ought to agree to, or one that we ought to try, are questions of detail, and therefore to that detail shall I defer them. I cannot, however, permit the particular parts of the measures to pass without taking notice of some of them. That part of the plan which refers to the gamekeepers appears to me to be a measure of violent injustice to a class of persons who, as far as the tax which they bear goes, already contribute pretty handsomely to the support of the State.

There is another part of the plan which I cannot pass by in silence : The navy of this country is so much, and justly, the favourite service of it, that no man is willing to find fault with it. I am the last man in this kingdom who would wish to do so, or to say any thing against any service that contributes to the greatness of this nation—such as I know the navy does. I feel, and I know I only feel in common with all my countrymen, gratitude to the navy ; but the circumstance of impressing men, even into that service, great and valuable as it is, would not be a part which a judicious friend to it would select for the subject of his panegyric. I am not now arguing the policy of the practice, for great as the grievance may be to the individuals who are the objects of it, the discussion will be unseasonable until we shall find a better mode for providing for that service, and therefore upon that subject I shall say nothing. But upon the subject of forcing men into the land service the case is widely different ; so much so, that I have never yet heard it defended in this country ; and yet this measure seems to me to have that tendency, for out of the force which is proposed to be raised, there is to be a certain proportion for the navy and a certain proportion for the land service. I cannot, for one, conceive any danger to which this country, under all its circumstances, can be exposed, that would make me ready to assent to a measure that had for its object the impressing the subjects of this country into the land service. I cannot assent to any measure that has for its object the increase of the military force of the kingdom in that manner. This is entering into the very spirit of the French requisitions, which we decry so much. The Chancellor of the Exchequer says, that only 1-6th part of

them shall be exercised at a time, that is, only 10,000, and that they will not be called to the service but in case of actual exigency. Now are not these words (abating the difference between a speech and the authority of the Legislature) the very words of the act of Parliament with regard to the militia, which says, "unless in case of invasion or imminent danger thereof." The consequence will be that the military force thus raised will be subject to military law. I wish to know whether it was the opinion of those who passed the act respecting the militia, that they should be subject to regulations, to which they now submit? Certainly it was not; and as it has been found expedient to call upon them to conform to the rules now adopted in that service, it would have been more manly in Parliament to alter the law in that particular. We are here told that the military force which is now proposed to be raised, is only to act in case of emergency. What is that to be? Until the French shall land upon our coast? No such thing; I know that such a restriction cannot, and ought not to be imposed upon Executive Government; because you should repel the danger when you are threatened by it. Why then it will amount to this, that whenever Ministers shall think fit to alledge there is danger, the whole of this military power to be entrusted to them for the internal defence of this country in case of invasion, will be entirely at their disposal. What security have we that no abuse will take place, respecting the application of this enormous force? What security have we that we are not now voting for a force, said to be intended for one purpose, and which are really to be applied for a different object? What security have we for trusting that this great military is not intended to supply the place of other troops, who are intended to be sent abroad? The right honourable gentleman alluded to the safety of these kingdoms; I do not chuse to follow him in that course, for I only speak of the safety of Great Britain, when I canvass the measure which is now before us. It is to that object, and to that only, that I intend it to be applied.

I do not know what information Ministers may have respecting the intention of the French to attempt an invasion of this country. I have none, except what I derive from newspapers. I believe that the idea of an invasion is as visionary as that of succeeding in it. I believe the French have no such intention, for they have a government which is likely to be much better informed of the disposition of the people and the situation of the country, than to be led to any hopes of success in such an attempt, therefore do I believe they will not be guilty of the rashness to attempt it. But supposing they had such desperate intentions; supposing they should

attempt to carry them into execution, I have no doubt of the issue. My hopes upon that subject are as sanguine as those of any other man in this country. But what should we do in the mean time? What is the duty of this House at this moment? To cherish the spirit of freedom in the people of this country; restore to them that for which their ancestors have bled. Make the Ministers really responsible. Let their Parliament not be confiding in the servants of the Crown, but watchful and jealous of the exercise of their power. Restore to them the right of popular discussion. Allow them to state freely the grievances they feel; repeal those laws which have forbidden the exercise of their most invaluable rights. In one word, instead of amusing them with panegyrics upon the form, allow them to possess the spirit of the old Constitution of England: then will you indeed see the energy of the people of England, and then you will have no occasion for adding to your internal military force, for then even an invasion would never be formidable. These are your real resources; the rest are all imaginary. I shall give no opposition to the plan that is now before you in its present stage. But I think it fair to say, some of the parts of it are such as, in the detail, I shall think it my duty to oppose.

Mr. Chancellor PITT. After what has already been said by my right honourable friend, I entertain some doubts whether I ought to detain the Committee one moment from the unanimous vote which I believe will be given upon the present occasion. I am sure, at least, that it will not be necessary to consume much of your time by replying at length to the short observations of the honourable gentleman (Mr. Sheridan), or to the more detailed remarks in which he has been followed by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) upon the same side, as I cannot but regard the declaration with which they prefaced and concluded their animadversions, that they did not mean to oppose the resolutions which I had the honour to propose, as a sufficient answer to the arguments by which it was accompanied. If the right honourable gentleman feels that the declarations of Ministers upon the subject which constitute the foundation of the present deliberations, are not sufficient to justify the measures which are to be grounded upon it; if he considers their assurances or their representations entitled to no confidence; if he is persuaded that there exists no danger of invasion, against which it is intended to provide; if he is convinced that the object of the preparations that are to be made, are destined to carry on other warlike operations than the plan avows, or are employed as pretexts to cover designs of ambition or of encroachment at home, if he be-

lieves that they are intended to prosecute that object of the war which he thinks proper to describe as unjust and diabolical, I would ask, how he can reconcile these principles with the conduct he is to pursue ; or, as a public man, upon what public ground he can rest that assent which he has bestowed upon the measures which have been suggested ? But while the right honourable gentleman indulged in these animadversions, he knew well that the precautions were demanded by the country as measures of self-defence, from which he could not withhold his concurrence ; he demonstrated by his actions, that he was in reality sensible that the present was not, like other wars, undertaken to maintain a point of national honour, or to defend a disputed interest, to support an ally that was attacked, or to guard remote or doubtful dangers, but that it was the first war in which a great and free people, in the prosecution of their commerce and the enjoyment of their prosperity, were called upon for a time to defend the sources from which they flowed ; and in compliance with the good faith which was due to their allies, and, urged by a sense of common danger, found themselves compelled to oppose unprovoked aggression, and resist principles hostile to every regular government. Why did not the right honourable gentleman follow up his principles, by opposing likewise the measures which were proposed to meet this danger, but because he believed that the situation of affairs is such as to require these precautions ; and because he must know that a false security could alone present the smallest chance of success in the attempt which has been threatened ; and because he knew that such was the character of the enemy with whom we had to contend, that they were not so liable to be deterred by the desperate nature of the enterprise, or by a consideration of the number of persons whom its ruin might devote to destruction ? Such, I am convinced, were the feelings of the right honourable gentleman upon this occasion, and such are the considerations by which his conduct is explained, although, perhaps, he found it necessary to colour his assent, and to disguise his conviction, by the invectives he introduced against the last Parliament, and against the conduct of Administration. Though, however, he reprobated the system and the measures of Administration, though he accused the justice and vilified the character of the former Parliament, he could not trust the natural conclusion of his own principles. He did not ask if any of the new Members, who had so lately come up impregnated with the sense of their electors ; or if the old Members, who were witnesses of the proceedings, and whose recollection of the last Parliament was so recent, would agree with him in the character which he had ascribed to it ? Nor did he

venture to make any appeal to ascertain who were those who would concur with him in asserting the principles he had professed! While I reflect upon these circumstances, I feel confident that it will not be incumbent upon me to answer at much length the arguments of the honourable gentlemen upon the other side the House, and particularly when the objections of the one are answered by the observations adduced by the other.

While the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) professed to agree with every sentiment of his honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan), they materially overthrew each other's reasonings, and every sentence uttered by the right honourable gentleman was confuted by that which preceded it. The internal order of battle seems to have been completely deranged, and the arguments of the honourable gentlemen themselves meet in hostile encounter. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) wished to impose upon Ministers a responsibility for the measures which were founded upon the assertion in His Majesty's speech, because, continued he, this matter rests only upon the information of the speech from the Throne, which I must consider as the speech of Ministers; and in order to supply the defect of this responsibility which attaches to Ministers by the most solemn and formal declaration, the honourable gentleman insists upon receiving satisfaction, and imposing responsibility by a communication less formal and less authentic! The right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) however proceeded as if Ministers were pleading on their responsibility, and then concluded by maintaining that there is no responsibility at all. The right honourable gentleman is likewise offended with the general argument of the necessity of precaution, which was employed by my right honourable friend (Mr. Dundas); but his honourable friend beside him (Mr. Sheridan) admits, that only general information was to be expected; so that to this argument the right honourable gentleman must lift up his hand and express his disapprobation, as he professes that he cannot act upon general information. But why, says he, did not the danger, which you now apprehend, long before this, induce you to demand the adoption of those measures of precaution which you now think it necessary to employ? No such plans, continued he, were pursued upon any former period. The right honourable gentleman too went out of his way to find comparisons to depreciate the characters of Ministers, and asserted, that to such measures as the present much better Ministers, in former wars, never had found it necessary to resort. He does not, however, mention who these much better Ministers are; and if the right honourable gentleman recollects the language he employed during the seven last years of the

American war, there was a time when he bestowed upon the conduct of that Administration, epithets as offensive, as *unjust* and *diabolical*. Why, exclaims the honourable gentleman, did you not call for these measures upon former occasions? Are we then gravely deliberating upon a great and important subject, and are we to be told that in certain given circumstances no precautions are to be taken because at a former period such measures were not required? May not the means which were judged adequate in a particular situation, be found insufficient when circumstances alter, or when danger is increased? The honourable gentlemen, though in other points their arguments were at variance, go on together contending that my right honourable friend had said, on a former occasion, that the force which this country possessed, was sufficient to repel the attacks of all Europe. Certainly I do not believe that my right honourable friend ever asserted, that in any possible case the volunteer corps would be sufficient for the defence of the country. If my right honourable friend had asserted that the spirit by which these volunteer associations were dictated, put in action as circumstances required, and accommodated to the pressure of danger, would be able to resist the efforts of the whole House of Bourbon, or of the Republic of France, aided by any particular branch of the House of Bourbon, or of any other combination of powers; such an opinion I believe to be just, and at least perfectly consonant to the well-known firmness and zeal of my right honourable friend. But may not the relative situation of the enemy present them with more specific means of carrying their purpose into execution, than they possessed at a former period, when it was necessary to guard against the dangers which then threatened them from various quarters? But you relied on the firmness and attachment of the people two years ago; and is it less now that you have recourse to extraordinary precautions? The attachment and loyalty of the people of this country, I trust, has experienced no diminution. It lives, and is cherished by that Constitution which, notwithstanding the assertions of the right honourable gentleman, still remains entire. Under the protection and support which it derives from the acts passed by the last Parliament, the Constitution inspires the steady affection of the people, and is still felt to be worth defending with every drop of our blood. The voice of the country proclaims that it continues to deserve and to receive their support. Fortified by laws, in perfect unison with its principles and with its practice, and fitted to the emergencies by which they were occasioned, it still possesses that just esteem and admiration of the people which will induce them faithfully to defend it against the designs of domestic foes, and the at-

tempts of their foreign allies. The right honourable gentleman discovers the extent of the adversity into which he represents the country to be fallen in some of the measures now proposed for its defence, and which he reprobates by the name of Requisitions, a species of levy, however, which so long as it was practised in France, he did not consider as deserving of any particular disapprobation. I will not, however, ask whether requisitions in France were a right and proper measure ; but let not the right honourable gentleman at once maintain that the attachment of the people renders these measures of defence superfluous, and in the next moment represent these precautions as proofs of the intolerable pitch of adversity to which the nation is reduced. The situation in which we are placed does not imply a suspicion of our power, though it justifies our precautions. That prosperity is deceitful and dangerous if it lead to a false security ; that the danger, though groundlessly apprehended, or falsely exaggerated, without exertion upon our part, can alone be of doubtful issue or perilous consequence, is the real opinion which the contemplation of the state of the country is fitted to inspire. The right honourable gentleman, when he expressed his dislike of the mode of pressing men for the public service, did not specifically apply his objection to the plan of augmenting the militia and raising the new supplies of cavalry ; for he admits that these may, in some measure, come under the description of personal force. The mode proposed of increasing the militia is not new in its principle. They are to be balloted in the same manner as the established militia of the country. The 60,000 men which it was proposed to add were to be formed precisely as the 90,000 of which the ordinary number consists. The present addition does not exceed the amount for which, on former occasions, it was thought necessary to provide. In 1756 a bill passed for doubling the number. The right honourable gentleman, however, in pressing his argument, runs before his recollection. The 15,000 men for the land and sea service are to be raised according to the provisions of the act passed two years ago upon this subject. Does the right honourable gentleman then consider this pressing ? No : it is meant to raise volunteers by contribution among the inhabitants of each parish, and, if they failed to produce the number at which they were rated, they were to pay a certain sum over the sum at which a person to serve could be procured. If the right honourable gentleman reprobates this mode as pressing, what was the language he held upon another occasion, and when a different mode was pursued ? In 1794, when voluntary offers of service were introduced for

the defence of the country, this mode was reprobated as repugnant to the Constitution; and now when men are called upon to contribute their property and their personal service to the defence of their country, it is discovered to be unjust, and stigmatized as requisition. They admit the necessity of precaution, and they reprobate every measure which is proposed; and while they agree that it is necessary to provide for the defence of the State, they are dissatisfied with the means by which security is to be obtained. Notwithstanding the unanimity with which the resolution will be voted, I cannot augur well for the future co-operation which the measures may obtain, when I consider the sentiments which the honourable gentlemen entertain, and the observations with which their present concurrence is accompanied.

Mr. FOX rose, and begged leave to observe, that the right honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer had undoubtedly made ample use of the first and grand rule in oratory, in taking whatever advantage he could of what might be conceived to be the weak side of his opponent. The right honourable gentleman seemed to be astonished that he should agree with him by giving no opposition that evening by vote, and yet should make a speech in every respect hostile to the measures of Ministers. In this respect, however, the right honourable gentleman founded his argument on a complete misinterpretation of his meaning, for it went upon the idea that his not opposing his vote to the present resolution, was giving his unqualified assent to the measures proposed. But this was by no means the stage in which Members were called upon to give their sentiments fully upon the question; one would in this respect imagine the right honourable gentleman was affecting the ignorance of a new Member of Parliament! He seemed entirely to have forgotten, or wished on the present occasion to forget, that according to the forms of Parliament any Member might bring forward his opposition to a measure at any period of its discussion he might think proper. The right honourable gentleman also, from a fortunate and accommodating deficiency of memory, had even forgot his own first speech during the present evening; for in that speech he had observed, that the present business was mere matter of form, and that before any serious determination took place, it was necessary to have a week's deliberation at least. He, for his part, was surely not inclined to be more forward than necessary in advancing any schemes of the present Ministry, and was the last man who should refuse his assent to giving as much time as possible previous to a decision. The arguments of the right honourable gentleman in many other respects had been equally

fallacious. He said, that his honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan) had called only for general assertions as to the danger at present to be apprehended, and that he (Mr. Fox) was completely dissatisfied on account of the generality of the answer; but in this there was no inconsistency; for although it might be true that greater danger actually did exist at present than at any former period, yet additional arguments were certainly necessary to prove this. Now the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) had given no individual pledge for his belief of the existence of this additional danger, but had merely harangued on the general propriety of being in a state of defence. He begged leave, therefore, to repeat that general arguments, as to the propriety and necessity of defence, were no answer on the present occasion. Did the right honourable Secretary, when he talked in so very high language on a former occasion, consider an invasion as a probable circumstance as at present? Why did he not then propose measures similar to the present; or why did he assert that the measures then adopted were perfectly sufficient for every purpose of security? The right honourable gentleman had been pleased to exercise his wit upon the expression he had made use of when he spoke of former Ministers being better than the present; as to the wars previous to the American war, no objections would probably be made to this assertion. As to the American war, he had always maintained it was unjust and disgraceful; but because it was so unjust and disgraceful, was that any reason that the present war was not worse? or because the Ministers who conducted the American war conducted it improperly, was that any reason why the measures of the present Ministry should not be more exceptionable? In his opinion indeed, the situation of the country then was prosperity when compared with the present; and with truth, indeed, continued Mr. Fox, may I, relatively speaking, call the present moment the moment of adversity. When measures of this nature, different from any that have ever been proposed at any former period, are thus brought forward, these very measures are a proof of the adversity of our country! The enormous increase of taxes laid on to support these measures is a proof of horrible adversity! Our relative situation to the other powers of Europe, and, above all, the surrender which has been made of our most valuable Constitutional rights and privileges, are irresistible convincing proofs of adversity. After all, Sir, he continued, I apprehend no danger from invasion. The danger I deprecate, is from the obstinate persecution of this war, which cannot fail to be attended with the ruin of our credit, our commerce, and our free Constitution. The right honourable gentleman opposite to me

affects to smile at my saying that the Constitution has been impaired ; he certainly thought so himself at one time ; but since he came into power, he has never thought of repairing it. He triumphs in the idea, that notwithstanding the number of new Members introduced into this Parliament, I do not seem inclined to appeal to them by demanding a vote on the present occasion ; but I remember the time, only the last Parliament but one, when that right honourable gentleman was in the habit of saying, that calling for the vote of this House, according to the representation of that period, was not taking the sense of the boroughs, cities and counties of Great Britain, but of Bengal, Bahar and Orissa. The system of representation continues the same. I cannot imagine by what magic the right honourable gentleman has on the present occasion procured a return of Members, whom he sincerely supposes to speak the sentiments of the nation.

I am next accused of inconsistency, because I say the Constitution is impaired, and yet allow that the people are so fond of it, that no danger is to be apprehended from invasion ; if this be inconsistency, I plead guilty ; I do think the Constitution is impaired ; but I am not on that account to be obliged on every occasion to vote even against the Minister who has impaired it, much less am I to say that I would not fight against the French. I do not as yet despair of the Constitution of this country : notwithstanding all the insults that have been offered to it, and all the injuries it has sustained, I would rather look to the country itself, to Parliament, or even to Ministers themselves for a remedy, than to invasion. The honourable gentleman says, that I have this evening called this an unjust war in more distinct terms than I have used at any former period ; but I appeal to all who have honoured what I have said with attention, either within or without doors, whether upon this subject I have ever used any management of expression. When it has been asserted that France was the aggressor, I have denied it, because from whatever quarter might come the first act of hostility, those are the aggressors who refuse to enter into a treaty or pacific negotiation upon any terms. I am accused too of traducing the country when I reprobate the measures of Ministers, under the idea that the country has given them its sanction : very different were the right honourable gentleman's sentiments at a former period. When I uniformly pronounced the American war, and all the measures by which it was carried on, to be unjust and diabolical ; when I reprobated the conduct of Ministers, while they persisted in their pernicious plans, I was not accused by that right honourable gentleman of traducing the country ; now that he himself is in

power; I should be glad to know what has identified him with the country, what has made him and the country so inseparable; that I cannot reprobate the one without traducing the other? This is undoubtedly not the time fully to discuss the policy of the war; but I must take the opportunity of again saying, that properly speaking, they commenced hostilities who rejected all means of a safe and honourable negotiation. I do not deny that one moment may be more favourable than another for negotiation; but I certainly cannot conceive that a negotiation with any nation, shall at one moment be inimical to universal order and civilization, and immediately after, when the same nation becomes more successful and victorious than ever, that negotiation shall become advisable.

I have called this war unjust, because previous to actual hostilities taking place, every thing possible ought to have been done to avert it. In this, I conceive myself to be supported by all established authorities on the subject. It has always been laid down as a maxim, that an outrage being committed, is not of itself a sufficient justification of war; it is also necessary that there should be a positive refusal of indemnification, and that they who stop the means of pacific discussion, act unjustly and become the real aggressors. The right honourable gentleman has animadverted on what fell from my honourable friend on this measure being taken from the example of France: this is certainly no place for a discussion upon the internal Government of France. I wish indeed we had heard less of it from the other side of the House; but if the French went so far as to establish a system of requisition, they may truly be said to have had necessity for their justification. It was indeed something like a manifestation of an intention to penetrate into France, when the Duke of Brunswick was within an hundred miles of the capital, proclaiming ruin and destruction wherever he went, and with the determination to re-establish the worst of all governments, the old despotism of France.—Are we placed in similar circumstances? are we now called upon to make similar exertions? The right honourable gentleman has commented on the bills that passed during the last Parliament, and he has said that ninety-nine in a hundred give them their approbation; my inquiries have indeed led me to a very different conclusion; and after the numerous petitions that were presented on that occasion, and other circumstances which took place, it is hardly decent in Ministers to bring forward such an assertion. The right honourable gentleman says that these bills produced peace and tranquillity, and were absolutely necessary—against whom? these few insignificant malcontents! this trifling hundredth part of the community? The argu-

ment is certainly inconsistent with the reasons used to induce the House to pass these bills ; for we were then told that though indeed it was a minority of the kingdom who were to be restrained, it was a large minority, a minority of considerable consequence ! but I demand farther—Have these bills produced persuasion among the people ?—Have they created affection to the Constitution, or to the present Administration ?—Or, have they merely prevented the free expression of opinions, and for a while suppressed the murmurs of discontent ? If the latter be the case, concealed discontent is certainly no evidence of strength. I believe too, that, on the occasion of passing these bills, the meetings which were held up as the ostensible cause were much traduced, and that very few indeed of those who attended them were enemies to the Constitution ; and that, even among them, many strong arms would have been found ready to resist hostile invasion. I again say, that, upon the present opening of the business, I do not approve of the present measures. Yet I do not assert, that circumstances cannot exist which might render additional means of defence necessary ; but I know well, that we already have a great army, and that a sufficient part of that army might be in this country to repel every attempt at invasion. The right honourable gentleman is amused at my honourable friend being dissatisfied with His Majesty's speech, which, as connected with responsibility, may, in Parliamentary proceedings, be called the speech of Ministers, and at the same time demanding additional satisfaction from Ministers themselves, in whom he has no confidence whatever ; but, as I understood my honourable friend, what he found fault with was the obscurity of expression in His Majesty's speech ; he consequently demanded a more explicit declaration of the grounds on which Ministers brought forward the present resolutions.

The right honourable gentleman has also triumphantly observed some difference of opinion between my honourable friend and myself, and conceived that there is a want of discipline on this side of the House. I certainly, without reluctance, leave to him all the advantages which he can derive from accuracy of discipline ; while I claim for myself and my friends the free and unlimited exercise of thought, speech, and action. The right honourable gentleman has held up the last Parliament as an example to the present. I have already given my sentiments respecting that Parliament, and only desire any man with unbiassed judgment to look at their proceedings for the purpose of forming an opinion :—In that Parliament the King of Sardinia was held up as a pattern of an ally (I do not bring this forward at present for the purpose of personal re-

lections against the unfortunate, but to hold out a warning to the present Parliament and to the country at large).—The King of Sardinia, by confiding in the Ministers of this kingdom, has been reduced to a state of positive ruin. Those allies only who have abandoned them and their measures may be said to be in a state of existence; and, if the present Parliament and their Representatives continue the same blind, implicit confidence, ruin to us also must inevitably be the consequence.

Sir WILLIAM PULTENEY did not expect that any difference of opinion would have arisen on the present question; a question in his mind that embraced so many salutary objects.—He had only one objection to it, and that was, its being a half measure; it ought to be extended to the full point; and on that ground he should meet the wishes of the Minister with double pleasure. He should not apply to Ministers for any additional information on the subject, it was evident that the French had an invasion of this country in view, and it therefore became the Executive Government to make every proper and necessary preparation.

As this force was to be commanded by country gentlemen, it could not be called an increase of the power of the crown: on the contrary, he should consider it to be an increase of the power of the country against the crown. We should not wait until an invasion was actually to take place. Must not time be given for men to be prepared and disciplined? or were they to march against an invading enemy, without the means of defence, or ignorant of the uses of those arms they might chance to have about them?

General TARLETON said, before they judged of the present measure, it would be necessary to consider its expediency; and he would prove to the House, from authentic papers upon their table, that the force of the country was sufficient to repel any attempt which might be made against it. From these papers it would appear, that there was now in the kingdom 20,000 well-trained cavalry, 57,000 fencibles and militia, and 9,000 regulars—little short of 100,000 men. This, and the alacrity and spirit of the country no way abated, must be more than sufficient for the purpose of defeating our enemies, and rendering futile any attempts they might hazard. Did the House not recollect that they were told the army of the enemy was annihilated in Germany, and that they could not muster sufficient force to attempt any descent upon this country? The militia-bill of 1756, did not propose double the number now raised, as was erroneously stated by the honourable gentleman.

In his opinion there was no danger of an invasion; but if such

an event was to take place, there existed in the breast of every Englishman a love for his country and Constitution sufficient to make him join in repelling it. The incorporating of more men into the militia, would draw off a great number of valuable persons from society. Besides, the measure would have the effect to extend martial law over the country, which would be of dangerous consequence. He would not oppose the measure in its present stage, but he desired that it might be viewed with all possible jealousy.

Mr. ELFORD. I rise, Sir, to make an observation or two on certain expressions used by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) opposite to me. In doing this, I know I shall experience considerable embarrassment, because I am not only unused to speak in public, but this is the first time I have had the honour of a seat in Parliament. However, the animadversions of the right honourable gentleman, on the conduct and motives of gentlemen on this side the House, were such as have affected me too sensibly to be passed over in silence. The right honourable gentleman seems to think that those who vote with Ministers, are dependant and servile; but I can safely aver, that I am as independent of the favour or the rewards of Ministers, as any gentleman, be he who he may, on his side of the House. Making this declaration, I shall, perhaps, be credited when I assure the House, that in any opposition I may be induced to give to any measure, or the support I shall this night give to Ministers, I have no motive but the good of the country. With regard to the two seditious bills, a great majority of the country are perfectly reconciled to their expediency. I have myself had much intercourse with the inhabitants of one of the most extensive counties of England. They are unanimous in their approbation of the measures. It is true petitions against them were at first industriously proposed for their signature, and every effort of calumny and misrepresentation employed to gain their concurrence; but if any thing like concurrence was at one time obtained, that concurrence was the effect of misrepresentations the most gross and inflammatory. They were told that if the bills passed into law, they durst not even meet to spend their evenings agreeably at each other's houses, without a Magistrate to watch and report their conversation: they were told their most valuable rights and privileges had been invaded, and that their utter extinction and subversion would be effected by those bills. They were told, in short, that their lives would be endangered by the operation of such laws. But how have the bills after all this operated? They have preserved the tranquillity of the country, and maintained a proper spirit of subordination, which without them could not be expected.

from a factious tribe of revolutionary doctors. That they have been thus salutary, is obvious. Hence the remedy was judiciously adapted to the disease. With these sentiments, I give my most cordial assent to the proposition now before the House.

Mr. FOX.—However, Sir, the honourable gentleman may have felt and expressed his own independence, nothing that could fall from him upon such a subject would have induced me again to address myself to you ; but he has alluded, in positive terms, to bills which I ever have reprobated and ever will detest. As a young Member, perhaps a greater degree of modesty would not have been unbecoming in a first speech. His assertions are delivered with an air of superiority. Sir, I do not doubt the gentleman's intercourse with the country to be extensive : but I very much suspect that he has not sufficiently attended to the proceedings of which he has so positively spoken. That some degree of misrepresentation might have accompanied the petitions in certain villages I can easily suppose ; but what public measure of any importance has not suffered by misrepresentation ? perhaps, too, the misrepresentation of which the honourable gentleman complains, were no other than certain clauses which were in the original bills, but were rejected and thrown out by the Committee. These clauses had been much commented upon in the course of the early discussions on the subject in general, and certainly it is within the recollection of gentlemen that the clauses themselves had for their object the subjecting private families to the domiciliary visits of the magistrates. Every family consisting of twelve or more persons might be made the object of the penalties of this law. However, these clauses did not survive the discussions in which their absurdity and despotism were detected and exposed. Even supposing the honourable gentleman correct in his statement, gentlemen will readily perceive that those circumstances might have given rise to all the misrepresentation which accompanied the invitation to efforts against the bills themselves. At any rate, the unbought, unprejudiced sense of a great majority of the inhabitants of the metropolis has been decidedly against them. And surely such opposition was at least of as much importance as the approbation of the honourable gentleman's county associates. I have myself the honour of representing a very populous city, and its inhabitants are almost unanimous in their determination to give every possible aid to procure a repeal of them. Nor is the period far distant, when their energies and their influence will be united for that purpose. Never, Sir, will I hear the quiet of the country ascribed to bills which have wounded the Constitution without having the assertion explained. And it surely might

have occurred to the honourable gentleman, that misrepresentations were employed as much, at least, by those with whom he acts as by their opponents. Undoubtedly, Sir, I think that misrepresentations as gross, with abundantly as much opportunity to give them effect, were upon that occasion employed by His Majesty's Ministers. Remembering that the Constitution for which our ancestors struggled and bled, has been more deeply wounded by the acts of the present Ministry, and especially by the conduct of apostates from the standard of liberty, I cannot sit down without telling the people of England and this House, that however reiterated and daring may be the future attacks upon their legitimate rights, I will never abandon the standard of liberty, but with my life.

Mr. CURWEN.—Agreeing as I do in every sentiment of opposition to the present war, and unwilling to take any thing on the credit of Ministers, I cannot silently give my assent to the introduction of a bill, the necessity of which has been in no respect proved. Had Ministers shewn that the state of the country is such as requires the measure, I am sure no man would more cordially go the full length to give them every confidence which the urgency and importance of such a crisis might demand. But the danger has not even been avowed. They have shrunk by low and paltry evasions from that sort of inquiry which honest men would have gloried in courting. One honourable gentleman has called the measure a half measure; but had he known the distressed situation of the country, had he looked, not to the beginning of the war, but to the present moment, he would have deplored the necessity for continuing to support the present military establishment, much more that additional one proposed. But these, Sir, are topics which rarely occur to men avowedly devoted to all the measures and all the arrangements of Ministers. Of this class I have the happiness not to be one. As a Member of the British Senate, as an admirer of our laws, as a lover of freedom I shall always resist the encroachments of power. I shall not on this subject rest satisfied merely with the dictum of a Minister; something of higher authority than his assertions will, I trust, be laid before the Committee. I expect we shall have clear proofs of danger exhibited in every picture that shall be henceforth drawn of this “manifested disposition to invade our isle.” Such alarms as have already been excited, and excited they have been with success where they have proceeded from ministers, and the sanction of them procured by those very means which their honourable friend, the new Member, has deprecated, even by misrepresentation. I once, indeed, thought that no Minister durst so openly insult this House and the

nation as to create that monstrous and expensive fiction. But they have themselves hitherto been the makers of national dangers—dangers too which have taken some hold even of the Throne. They have poisoned the ears of Majesty not only with these false alarms, but by foully representing the people as possessing neither affection for their Sovereign, nor attachment to the Constitution. A time however must come, when the nation will have an opportunity of spurning with honest indignation the authors of their sufferings; when the Sovereign must know the sentiments of his people, and the people convince their oppressors that although they have hitherto borne the scourge, they will not bear it any longer.

Mr. Serjeant ADAIR vindicated the support he had given Ministers on the subject of the two bills. He reprobated the allusions made to apostates from the standard of liberty. He said, he was no apostate, but rejoiced in the vote he had given for two bills, the salutary effects of which were now evidently felt by all who, like him, had seen and lamented the alarming progress of sedition and treason. If the bills had rendered less frequent those public meetings lately held, they had been of the utmost service to the country; for what sort of popular meetings were the bills levelled against? Those only which disseminated treason, anarchy and confusion. This was his conviction, and much as he esteemed the right honourable gentleman, the name of apostate or any other appellation, should not deter him from openly expressing his opinion.

Sir GREGORY PAGE TURNER professed much and zealous concern for the country, under the apprehensions of the avowed hostile intentions of the enemy. To the principles of the British Constitution, Sir Gregory said he had sworn fealty. He had done this, by the advice and example of a respected father, and he should instil the same sentiments of love and veneration into the breasts of his own children for that constitution. He was willing that it should be understood that he had a considerable stake in the country. But when he said this, he did not mean to insinuate that was at all the prevailing motive of his present conduct. He should, without hesitation, take up arms himself in defence of the Constitution and the country, and was ready to make an adequate sacrifice for their preservation and independence. He cordially approved of the present measures of precaution and defence; but expressed his hope that we might yet have peace, if it pleased God and the French Directory.

The first resolution was then put and carried.

The second resolution, respecting the augmentation of the mi-

litia, to be trained as shall be directed in the bill, and be called out in cases of necessary defence, was then moved and agreed to.

The third resolution, relative to the provisional force of cavalry to make the regiments complete, as well as respecting the service of certain descriptions of individuals to be hereafter agreed upon, was put and carried.

The Chairman then put the different resolutions, which were agreed to, and ordered to be reported. The report was immediately brought up; read a first and second time, and agreed to.

Bills were ordered to be brought, pursuant to the said resolutions.

Mr. Chancellor Pitt and Mr. Secretary Dundas were ordered to prepare and bring in the same.

The House adjourned.

Wednesday, 19th October.

Mr. Chancellor PITT brought in a bill, pursuant to his first resolution passed last night, for raising a certain number of men from the different counties of England, and stewartries of Scotland, to be distributed between the navy and regular land forces.

The bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

General TARLETON expressed a desire to know, if it was not the intention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to have the bill, which he had just brought in, for raising an additional body of 15,000 men, printed, previous to its being read a second time?

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that the best mode, in his opinion, of proceeding, in bills of this nature, was to have them read a second time as soon as possible, and committed, that the blanks might be filled up. When the blanks were thus filled up, and the bills printed, a reasonable interval would be allowed for taking them into consideration, before they were recommitted; and that would be the fittest stage for their undergoing a full discussion. The Supplemental Militia bill he proposed bringing in to-morrow, and fixing some day next week, perhaps Friday, for its being read a second time.

Mr. CURWEN was far from wishing to interpose a moment's unnecessary delay to a business that seemed of such urgency; but if there was no very material objection to it, he thought it would be rather better to fix a more distant day, that time might be allowed for sending the bill into the country.

Mr. PLUMER joined in the same wish, for the same reasons; and proposed Monday se'nnight, instead of Friday next.

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied, that for the reasons he had urged last night, he could not consent that any great delay should intervene, nor could he see that there could be any great difference between Friday and Monday, as, according to the usual train of parliamentary business, only one day could be gained by the delay proposed. He would not, however, object to substituting Monday se'nnight to Friday next, if gentlemen imagined such a delay of any importance.

Thursday, 20th October.

Petitions were presented for the following places, which were ordered to be taken into consideration as follow :

The borough of Tregony, November 10.

Melbourne Port, November 10.

County of Kent, December 22.

Maidstone, December 29.

Worcester, January 3.

County of Stirling, December 27.

Serjeant ADAIR brought up the Quaker's relief bill, which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Thursday next.

The bill for raising an additional number of men for the service of the army and navy, was read a second time, and ordered to be committed to-morrow.

Mr. Chancellor PITT brought up the bill for the augmentation of the militia, which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

The Committee to consider of His Majesty's speech, was adjourned by motion to Tuesday.

Adjourned.

Friday, 21st October.

The order of the day for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of Supply being read, the Secretary at War moved that the estimates presented on a former day should be referred to this Committee.

The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Supply,

The SECRETARY at WAR said, that owing to the necessary delays in transmitting the several accounts from the respective offices connected with his department, he could now submit only

a part of the estimates to the Committee. The portion of them he held in his hand, would afford every information in point of fact that could properly come before them. The accounts yet to be delivered were not of much importance, because they scarce differed in their amount and detail from those of the same description that had been delivered last year. The estimates on the table contained details of the most material arrangements of the current year, and would be found every way explicit on the subject of the expenditure. As it would be recollected that a diminution in the number of troops on the establishment had taken place last year, from which a saving of 800,000*l.* arose, it would not be expected that any considerable diminution would take place in the amount of the present estimates. The whole force of this country, consisting of the common distribution of guards and garrisons, and colonies and plantations, amounted to 195,674 men, the expence of which would amount to 5,190,000*l.* so that it would appear that the expence of this year would not exceed that of the last. The home army and the army abroad were to be understood by the general division of guards and garrisons, and colonies and plantations. The home army contained all the troops which might be considered as serving for the defence of the country, guards, regulars of every description, and fencibles. The army at home amounted to 60,765 men, from which arose an excess above last year of 11,546 men. The army abroad, or the troops in the colonies and plantations, it was well known comprehended the troops in the West Indies, in Corsica, Gibraltar, Canada, Nova Scotia, and every foreign service, except those in the East Indies, which came under a separate description, amounted to 64,276 men. The army abroad was composed entirely of regulars; the army at home of regulars, invalids, militia, and fencibles. The militia was nearly the same as last year, with the difference of the city regiments. There was a small augmentation of the invalids from the circumstance of calling upon the out-pensioners, who were capable of performing this species of duty. Upon the Fencibles there had been a diminution of troops in each regiment, which had occasioned a corresponding difference in their amount since last year. As the other articles were of a nature that were less exposed to variation, he should not enter into any particulars of their amount, but should conclude with moving for the land service of this year the number of 195,000 men.

General FARLTON said that he should add the result of the articles omitted, amounting to 580,000. to the sum of the estimate of this year, arising from the articles on the table. He was happy

that at a period such as this, at a period when alarms were abroad, and fears of invasion entertained, that we had such a force as 60,000 men at home, and that the army in the colonies amounted to so large a body. The general said, he had expected that the honourable Secretary at War would have gone more into detail. Only twelve articles were stated in the accounts and estimates of the war department for the present year, whereas those of last year contained nineteen articles. Considering the disproportion between these statements, surely a House of Commons ought to be watchful over the acts of Ministers, but especially a new Parliament. He was happy, however, that at a period of alarm the forces under the head of guards and garrisons were 60,567; nor did the account of our plantations having 64,000 men to protect them less gratify his feelings. It was a source of consolation to him that so large a provision had been made. With respect to the regiments of light dragoons, he should have thought that the expence of raising and maintaining them would have been paid by the East-India Company themselves. They were, he thought, as well able to pay for them as the people of this country. Nay more so. At least he had heard the resources of India extolled by certain men rather more than those of Great Britain. With respect to the 360,000*l.* for recruiting service, it rather surprized him, as there certainly was no occasion for recruiting in a country where requisitions were about to be made. Ministers had completely abandoned the old mode of raising men, and therefore it was that he saw no propriety in that charge. On the subject of the requisition itself he thought it was a measure of necessity, not altogether objectionable; but while the force of the country, besides regulars, amounted to 57,822 fencibles, and 43,864 militia-men, a requisition on the mere surmise of a Minister was not a measure that a considerate House of Commons would adopt. Of the fencible corps as a body, he had little or no knowledge; but he presumed there must be individuals amongst them, perhaps, indeed, the whole of them, would be found as ready to encounter an enemy as the regulars. For the militia, again, he had a sincere respect, because it was composed of the most valuable body of men in the country. But there had many abuses crept into the army, which he could wish to see rectified: among others that of having batmen in almost every company. This was particularly inimical to the true interests of the country, and was injurious to His Majesty's service. Batmen, he said, were a description of men who were taken out of the ranks, to serve the officers of a regiment in menial capacities.

In making these selections, the choice always fell on the most deserving among the privates; they were, indeed, those most distinguished for honesty, sobriety, and personal accomplishments, who were adopted for those services. Thus the very men who ought, above all others, to be kept and cherished in a regiment, were detached from it. When he served in the army, no batmen were allowed. There was likewise a considerable expence incurred without any reason, by taking sixteen or seventeen serjeants to serve as musicians. This he considered as having music at too great a price, and as an expence quite unnecessary. It appeared that a reduction in the pensions had now taken place, and he was glad that the advice which last year had been given from that side of the House to adopt this measure had at last been slowly taken up and acted upon by Ministers. If the extraordinaries, such as barracks, ordnance, &c. were added, the whole expence of the army this year would not fall short of its amount last year. There was a fact which was of the utmost importance, well deserving of the consideration of the House of Commons, and especially of a new Parliament, that he could not help mentioning: Last year the expence of the army amounted to the full sum of the revenue of this country, the year previous to the war. If the army cost so much, how were the other expences of the Government to be defrayed? The right honourable gentleman, in stating the amount of the army establishment, had not given any particulars of its application. His Majesty's speech, however, had directed their attention to the achievements which had been performed by our troops in different parts of the world. Where then were the instances in which the courage and conduct of our troops had been displayed? In looking round for the evidence of their reputation, it appeared rather borrowed from our allies than conquered from the enemy. That reputation, no doubt, would be kept in the best condition in order to be restored. It might be supposed to weigh something in a negotiation; but he hoped it would not be allowed to impede the conclusion of a peace. Where then had the troops been employed? His Majesty's speech formerly had held out great promises of exertions in the West Indies, and the exploits which had been achieved in that quarter had been considerably extolled. He did not think, however, that there was much subject of boast. The armament which had been equipped for expeditions to the West Indies had been attended with enormous expence. What was the reason that the full advantage which it might have been expected to produce had not been obtained? Had the fleet sailed too late in the season, or did the fault lie at the door of Ministers? Whether we looked at

the general state of the West Indies, or at particular islands, there was not much room for satisfaction or exultation. The Caribs in St. Vincent's were still in a state of insurrection. The troubles in Guadeloupe, and various other islands, still interrupted and destroyed the industry of the inhabitants. Victor Hughes had not been dislodged, nor his operations disconcerted. In St. Domingo, the melancholy ravage which had been made by disease afforded no satisfaction in the review. Was the attempt to reduce this island to be prosecuted at the expence of the lives of so many gallant and brave men? Almost every person in that House and in the country had to lament the loss of their friends, brought to an untimely grave by the dreadful mortality which swept every thing before it. If we considered the extent of the armament, there was something surely faulty in the plan, or why was there so little obtained for so much expence and so many sacrifices? Inquiries had been demanded upon this subject, but inquiry was continually resisted. Gentlemen were even told to confide in Ministers, as if it had not been the duty of Parliament to inquire into the conduct of the Executive Government. Such was the language which was held out to the new Parliament by gentlemen on the other side. Inquiry was the duty of the House of Commons. It could not be refused by a good Minister, because it tended to demonstrate the wisdom of his conduct; and it could only be refused by those who were afraid to submit their measures to the test of examination. Upon this point, however, he should not go farther at present, but should content himself with what he had already stated.

Colonel SLOANE said, that the militia were upon the same footing as regular troops, with regard to the servants kept by the officers; and that this was an allowance perfectly understood to be consistent with the establishment.

General TARLETON said, it was true that officers were sometimes allowed to have a servant who were exempted from duty; but the difference between a good and a bad regiment consisted in the number of men taken out of the ranks, and exempted from duty. In the 16th Light Dragoons, in which he had served, none were allowed. In the militia, the officers were chiefly men of fortune who were able to provide themselves with servants in a different manner, and at such a time as this, to take fifty or sixty men from the ranks, was certainly no inconsiderable inconvenience.

Colonel SLOANE said, that in the regiment of militia to which he belonged the servants of officers were called upon to perform all the details of a field day.

Colonel GASCOYNE rose and said. Sir. I do not rise with an intention of taking any part in the debate, more than to set the right honourable gentleman right, with respect to established military customs, if batmen were not allowed to officers in America, as in that part where the honourable general served, it must have been owing to the peculiarity of the service, and not from any established rule of the army. During the campaigns I had the honour to serve on the continent, every officer in proportion to his military rank, had batmen allowed him, nor is the custom confined to our military establishment; the Austrians, Prussians, Hessians, and every description of military I had ever the honour to serve with, allowed batmen to the officers; in case of absolute necessity, they were ordered to fall into the ranks again, but in general, formed a guard to the baggage of the army, nor do I think it necessary we should depart from such a custom, when we have an example for continuing it in the best disciplined troops in Europe. With respect to the mortality lately prevalent in St. Domingo, I am happy to assure the House from authority, that the latest accounts mention the malignancy of it having almost subsided, nor can I see any strong arguments for our relinquishing that island, from the late deplorable mortality amongst our troops; for notwithstanding an enemy must be well aware of the fatality of that climate, we plainly perceive by the exertions to regain it, they place no small estimation on it; I have been this day informed from good authority, that we have by the best returns from the several islands in the West Indies, 18,000 effective men there fit for duty.

General TARLETON explained.

Mr. HUSSEY desired to know what was the number of effective men among the 195,000 contained in the resolution.

The SECRETARY AT WAR replied, that he was not prepared to give any answer to the question.

Mr. FOX said he had heard it alledged that the engagement made on the part of this country with the Maroons had not been faithfully adhered to. He understood this to be the declared opinion of an officer, with whom he had not the honour of being personally acquainted, but of whose military talents and private worth he had a high opinion, from what he had frequently heard of him. That officer had been in a situation which enabled him to judge of the circumstance to which he alluded; and therefore the opinion of such a person had great weight with him. The Committee would easily conceive that he alluded to Colonel Walpole.—This was, however, nothing but a report, and his chief object for alluding to it was, to learn what credit it deserved.

Mr. BRYAN EDWARDS. Not having had the honour of a seat in this House until the present Parliament, it may appear very presumptuous in me to call the attention of the House to any observations of mine ; but being perfectly well acquainted with the subject to which the right honourable gentleman alludes, I beg the indulgence of the House while I state a short history of the Maroon Negroes ; the cause of the late war between those people and the inhabitants of Jamaica, and the conduct of the Colonial Assembly in the termination of the business.

The Maroon Negroes, Sir, are the descendants of the Spanish Negroes, who, when the Island surrendered to the English in 1655, took to the woods. You will find in Thurlow's State papers an account of them, which was transmitted to Government by General Venables. He relates " that it was impossible to come to any treaty with them—that they were wild and lawless savages, who had no moral sense, and on whom neither persuasions nor gentleness could make any impression." They were therefore left in possession of the interior country and continued masters of it for near a century ; murdering without mercy all such white persons as attempted to make any settlements near them, not sparing even the women and children. In the year 1739, Governor Trelawney entered into a treaty with them, granting them security and freedom on certain conditions, and compelling them to reside in towns or villages apart from the Negroes in servitude. In the year 1760 I became acquainted with these people, and I soon observed that they were suspicious allies, and would, some time or other, become very formidable enemies. Yet it is not true, as was stated in this House, that the inhabitants of Jamaica wished to get rid of them. The inhabitants, in general, conceived the highest opinion of their utility, and treated them with the utmost kindness : they never asked a favour of Government or of the assembly that was refused them.

Concerning the origin of the late war, the case was this : Two of the Maroons having been guilty of a felony in the town of Montego Bay, by stealing from a poor man two of his pigs, were tried according to law, and according to the very letter of their treaty, and sentenced to receive a few lashes at a cart's tail. The sentence was mild, and the punishment not severe ; but the whole body of the Trelawney-town Maroons, in revenge for the indignity offered to two of their number, immediately took to arms, and soon afterwards actually proceeded to set fire to the plantations. Sir, I shall not take up the time of the House by a long detail of military transactions. The gallant officer whom the right honourable gen-

tleman named, (Col. Walpole) had undoubtedly the merit, under the judicious orders of the Earl of Balcarres, of putting an end to this most unnatural and unprovoked rebellion ; and if those two distinguished persons differed in opinion concerning the terms and conditions on which the Maroons surrendered, it is exceedingly to be lamented. They both deserved equally well of the community and the country at large. Such, however, I am sorry to say was the fact, and the Governor therefore very properly left the whole to the determination of the Assembly. Sir, the first conditions on which the Maroons were to surrender, were these ; 1st, That they should on a day appointed give up their arms and surrender all the fugitive enslaved negroes who had joined them. 2d, That they should ask the King's pardon on their knees. On these terms their lives were to be spared, and permission granted them to remain in the country. Now, Sir, it is a fact not to be denied that they did not surrender on the day fixed ; and that they did not, then or on any day afterwards, give up the fugitive negroes. I do not believe that Colonel Walpole avers that they did. Colonel Walpole, Sir, who is not less distinguished for his humanity than his bravery, thinks, I believe, that it would have been generous in the Assembly to have imputed their not surrendering in time to their ignorance, rather than to any wilful delay ; and politic to have let them remain in the country ; but I do not conceive that he charges either the Earl of Balcarres or the Assembly with treachery. The Assembly, however, thought differently from Colonel Walpole, and that men who had violated their allegiance, and entered into a bloody and cruel war, without provocation, were unfit to remain in the island ; yet, in the disposal of these people, they manifested a degree of generosity and tenderness which is without example. Sir, after providing them with fit and proper clothing for a change of climate, the Assembly sent them to America, and appointed three gentlemen to accompany them thither with a sum of 25,000l. to purchase lands for their future settlement, and for their maintenance for the first year, after which it is hoped the example of the white people, with whom they are settled, and being removed from the former wild and savage way of life, they may become a useful body of yeomanry. I will only add one word more. Sir, there is now a gentleman in this town, who conversed with the Maroons the night before they sailed, and who assures me that they express themselves well satisfied with the conduct of the assembly towards them, and declared, that having conversed with some American Negroes concerning the country to which they were going, they

said they were content to go. I hope therefore we shall hear no more of the business.

Mr. WILBERFORCE said, the honourable gentleman who had just sat down, appeared to be perfectly well prepared on the subject. With regard to the origin of the war of the Maroons, he confessed he did not know more than any other gentleman; he had heard different and contradictory accounts. He would only observe, that with respect to the Maroons, they had no representatives in that House to stand up in their behalf—but the Planters had. One other remark he would make; it was for the purpose of that alone he had taken the liberty of troubling the House. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Edwards) had said the Maroons were not fit subjects for lenity. Whether they were or were not, he could not take upon him to determine. The Maroons, however, had been for 140 years on the Island, and he conceived they were fit subjects of instruction, if they were so untutored as described. They had been British subjects; but he was yet to learn whether any steps had ever been taken to instruct them, or to bring them to a true knowledge of the blessings of Christianity. It was now near a century since any attempt had been made to convert the Africans to Christianity, at least none had been made which he knew of. If there had been any, he should hear it mentioned with satisfaction. He did not stand up as the advocate of the conduct of the Maroons, but he thought the necessary means had not been taken to make them acquainted with habits of virtue, which if inculcated in their minds, might have prevented their having been guilty of the excesses imputed to them.

M. B. EDWARDS in reply said, when he took the liberty of answering the charge of the right honourable Member over the way (alluding to Mr. Fox) respecting the faith of the country having been broken; he did so, because he knew the assertion was not true. Colonel Walpole could not say it had been broke; although he disapproved of the measures against the Maroons. He did not expect, after he had answered one observation to have another started. Now the Planters are accused of not instructing the Maroons in religion, and initiating them in the habits of civilized life. When objections were started upon speculative grounds, there was no end to them. Were he called upon to deliver his own private opinion upon the subject, he would perhaps disapprove of the mode of confining the Maroons to separate communities; but situated as they were in this respect, they spoke a language of their own, and of course being unacquainted with the language of the island, they were not capable of benefiting from the common means

of instruction, a circumstance which, of itself, was a sufficient reply to the objection of the honourable gentleman. Their language was a mixture of the Spanish, and another language, which made it impossible to teach them the principles of religion. He thought whoever took it in hand would have hard work to make Christians of them. They were so addicted to polygamy, that it would require the utmost exertion of human ingenuity to confine them to one woman. He was contented with one woman, but he was sure no Maroon was. With regard to instructing them by sending Clergymen among them, he believed such an attempt would be impossible, for he did not know any Clergyman that would much like to go. To his certain knowledge, the Maroons were Cannibals. He was sure if a Clergyman was to be sent to them, instead of listening to his doctrines, they would eat him up. He believed that under all these circumstances the honourable gentleman would have some difficulty to make them converts; but there was no mode of proselytism which he (Mr. Wilberforce) could suggest, that would strike him with surprise, after having once heard him propose, on the moment that a ship arrives from Africa, to send a Clergyman with a pail of water to baptize all her cargo, without ever previously attempting to instil into their minds the principles of religion, or to inform them respecting the nature and end of the ceremony.

Mr. WILBERFORCE apologized for having made an observation which was so foreign from the present question before the Committee. He was happy, however, to find that the honourable gentleman who spoke last agreed with him so far that the Maroons ought not to have been secluded from the common society of the island, by mingling in which they might gradually have acquired civilized sentiments and manners. For his own part he did not mean that people should go and reside among them; all he wished to infer was that they ought to have received such instructions as was possible to give them; their children at least might have been taken and educated.

Mr. EDWARDS explained, that when he talked of their being kept in separate communities, he did not mean that this was the fault of the Government, but of their own perverseness of disposition. They had been frequently invited to settle in the towns, and every encouragement offered to them, but they would never listen to any invitation, not be allured by any encouragement which could be held forth. He was sorry to find that the honourable gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) entertained ideas, and indulged him-

self in the formation of plans totally inconsistent with human nature, and the present condition of man.

Mr. FOX was extremely glad that he had said the few words that he did upon the late transactions with the Maroons, as it had given rise to the explanation of the honourable gentleman (Mr. Edwards), and from the facts which had been adduced, he would not accuse the government of Jamaica of keeping bad faith with the Maroons, more than he would accuse Shylock, in the Merchant of Venice, of a breach of contract ; it appeared that they had adhered strictly to the letter of their engagement. From what had been said, it was evident that Colonel Walpole thought either that the treaty was not kept, or that it was too strictly kept ; and, because the honourable gentleman differed in opinion from that Officer, it did not follow that he was right, and that the Colonel was wrong. He hoped therefore that they would have some farther account of the business from Ministers, either on this or on a future day ; and that Colonel Walpole's opinion, which was certainly of great importance, should be fairly stated to the House. The honourable gentleman had stated that the Maroons were sent away with great attention ; and that they would form a useful body of yeomanry in another quarter of His Majesty's dominions. He agreed with him, that the most likely way to render them useful was to remove them from scenes of cruelty, and the sight of slavery. But he maintained that transportation was what they were extremely averse to, and that the Government had sent them to North America in violation of the treaty which it had formed with them. He hoped that the subject would come before the House on a future day, and that Ministers would be prepared to vindicate the propriety of the measures which they had countenanced.

The resolutions were then put separately, and carried *nem. con.*

A CORRECTED ESTIMATE of RECEIPTS and PAYMENTS made, or to be made, by the East-India Company, in England, from the 1st of March 1796, to the 1st of March 1797; containing the actual Receipts and Payments from the 1st of March to the 1st of September 1796, and continued by estimate to the 1st of March 1797.

RECEIPTS.	PAYMENTS.
Cash in the Treasury on 1st March 1796 (Morning) exclusive of duty on tea £. 459,397	Customs £. 1,110,328
Company's goods sold and to be sold 6,380,300	Freight and demorage 1,951,114
Honourable Board of Ord- nance, for salt-petre delivered 60,000	Goods and stores exported 1,218,877
Private trade and Dutch goods sold to the 1st of September 1796 1,508,488	India debt 518,839
Charges and profit on private trade and Dutch goods sold to 1st of September 1796 154,430	Bills of exchange from India and China 755,971
Customs on private trade 61,956	Bonds granted to the registered creditors of the Rajah of Tanjore 43,316
Freight on ditto 26,628	Bullion exported 458,186
One year's interest at 3l. per cent. per ann. on 1,207,559l. 15s. the Company's share of the annuities transferred to the Bank, agreeably to act of Parliament 36,226	Purchase of teas, &c. 10,141
Persons returned from India 24,700	Charges on merchandize, in- cluding supra cargoes, com- mission, and interest on loans, &c. 903,747
Government for stores and sup- plies to His Majesty's troops, &c. 351,510	Alms-houses at Poplar 1,294
Chinfurah cause 59,307	Dividends on stock, and in- terest on bonds 707,677
Money borrowed of the Bank 250,000	Bonds paid off and to be paid off 519,592
£. 9,372,942	Proprietors of private trade 892,119
	Balances of Dutch goods sold under the act of 34 Geo. III. cap. 80. 778,483
	Buyers of tea returned 1,160
	Warrants passed the Court un- paid 74,600
	Seamen for Government 15,608
	Chinfurah cause 165
	Captains whose ships will be worn out 90,000
	Money paid the Bank 150,000
	Government for troops, &c. 200,000
Balance against the 1st of March 1797 1,028,275	£. 10,401,217
£. 10,401,217	

East-India House,
the 28th of October, 1796.

Errors excepted.

W. RICHARDSON,
Accomptant.

An ACCOUNT of the Nett Produce of the PERMANENT TAXES, which subsisted previous to the 5th of January 1791, in the years ending the 10th of October 1795 and 1796 respectively; adding thereto the difference between the produce of the duties on home-made Spirits in each year respectively, and the average produce thereof in three years, ending the 10th of October 1794; and adding likewise the amount of the sums paid from the revenue of customs on account of bounties for Corn imported; or bounties for raising Seamen.

	In the years ending October 10th,	
	1795.	1796.
Produce of the permanent taxes which subsisted previous to 1791 -	13,353,572	12,798,326
Loss on the duties of the distillery which subsisted previous to 1791*	- - - -	554,181
Bounties on corn paid out of the re- venue of customs - - - -	- - - -	449,381
Bounties paid out of the revenue of customs for raising seamen - -	116,935	51,491
	<u>£. 13,470,507</u>	<u>13,853,379</u>

Treasury Chambers,
October 27th, 1796.

GEORGE ROSE.

* The produce of the old duties, on home-made spirits in the year ending 10th October, 1795, exceeded the average of the three preceding years.

An ACCOUNT of the Amount of the Old Duty on BRITISH SPIRITS, paid into the Exchequer, in the year ending 10th October, 1795.

	£.	s.	d.
England - - -	711,838	0	0
R. WARRING, Accomptant General.			
Scotland - - -	36,000	0	0
P. BARTLETT, Accomptant General.			

Excise Office,
27th October. 1796.

G. J. CHOLMONDELEY,
H. REVELEY,
J. OLMIOUS,
T. CASWALL,
A. PHIPPS.

An ACCOUNT of the Amount of the Old Duty on BRITISH SPIRITS (paid into the Exchequer) for three years, ending the 10th of October 1794, distinguishing each year; also the Amount of the Old Duty on British Spirits (paid into the Exchequer) for the year ending the 10th of October, 1796.

ENGLAND.

		£.	s.	d.
Years ending the 10th October	1792	644,104	0	0
	1793	603,402	0	0
	1794	655,658	0	0
		<hr/>		
Year ending the 10th October	1796	98,207	0	0
		<hr/>		

R. WARING, Accomptant General.

SCOTLAND.

Years ending the 10th October	1792	36,000	0	0
	1793	36,000	0	0
	1794	36,000	0	0
		<hr/>		
Years ending the 10th October	1796	18,000	0	0
		<hr/>		

P. BARTLETT, Accomptant General.

Excise Office,
London, 27th October, 1796.

G. J. CHOLMONDELEY,
H. REVELEY,
J. OLMIOUS,
T. CASWALL,
A. PHIPPS.

An ACCOUNT of the BOUNTIES paid from the Commencement of the Act of the thirty-sixth of His Majesty, cap. 21. on CORN imported into the several Ports of Great Britain to the 10th of October, 1796.

£. 449,381 18 8

THOMAS IRVING,
Inspector General of the Imports
and Exports of Great Britain.

Inspector General's Office,
Custom House, London,
27th October, 1796.

An ACCOUNT of the BOUNTIES paid to SEAMEN in the several Ports of Great Britain, pursuant to the Act of the thirty-fifth of His Majesty, cap. 9. from the commencement of the said act to the 10th of October 1795, and from the 10th of October 1795 to the 10th of October 1796.

Year ending the 10th of October 1795	£. 116,935	2	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
Year ending the 10th of October 1796	51,491	9	0 $\frac{3}{4}$

THOMAS IRVING,
Inspector General of the Imports
and Exports of Great Britain.

Inspector General's Office,
Custom House, London,
27th October, 1796.

Monday, 24th October.

The SPEAKER acquainted the House, that Norman M'Leod, Esq. who petitioned against the election for Melbourne Port, and Peter Botham, Esq. who petitioned against the election for Guildford, had not entered their recognizance upon said petitions conformably to act of Parliament.

The orders for hearing the said petitions were discharged.

Mr. STURT moved, that the following papers be laid before the House: An account of the navy and victualling bills which have been registered from the 31st of December 1795, to the 1st of October 1796; an account of all the bills issued for the transport service, from the 31st of December, to the 1st of October, 1796; an account of the money received upon the lottery, for 1796; an account of the money issued upon the land and malt taxes for 1796; an account of the sums received upon the vote of credit for 1796; an account of the sums advanced by the Bank of England for the public service since the 31st of December 1795, and outstanding on the 1st of October 1796.

The papers were ordered to be made out.

In a Committee of the whole House upon the act of last Session of Parliament, for regulating the importation and exportation of corn,

Mr. RYDER said, that although the abundance of the last harvest had occasioned a diminution of the price of bread, yet he did not think it would be prudent for the House to relax its solicitude. It was true the present state of the corn-market was such as gave him reason to hope that the price of flour would effectually prevent

exportation ; but these prospects could not, he thought, justify the instant repeal of the provisions which had been made by the last Parliament. He would therefore propose that a bill should be brought in which should embrace three points : 1st, To prohibit the exportation of corn, flour, meal, and potatoes ; 2d, To encourage the importation of corn, flour, meal, and potatoes ; and 3d, To allow the importation of all sorts of provisions, free of duty. The bill he should propose might be altered or repealed any time in the course of the present Session, in case a fall should take place in the price of corn, before the next harvest.

The House being resumed,

Mr. HOBART moved for leave to bring in the bill.

Leave was given.

Tuesday, 25th October.

The bill for the annual duty on malt passed the Committee of the whole House, and the Report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

The land-tax bill was also committed to a Committee of the whole House.

Mr. ROSE stated, that this bill was the same as that of last and former years with one exception, and that was with regard to the conduct of the assessors. Upon that subject he should propose a clause, requiring that the assessors should take a certain oath, that they would inquire into the real annual value of all lands, &c. of which they were assessors, and would without favour or affection, prejudice or malice, assess every person charged with the land-tax, in a fair, impartial and equal manner, according to such value, &c. He proposed this on account of there having been many complaints made of partiality in the assessors. This was a measure not at all of a public concern any farther than regarded the due performance of duty in the assessors of the land-tax. An oath to this effect was administered to the assessors of all the other assessed taxes.

This clause was brought up and made part of the bill, which then passed the Committee, and the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

In a Committee of the whole House on the bill for augmenting the militia, &c.

Mr. ROSE said, that a clause he should propose, and which the Committee would have to consider, was, that when the militia of the kingdom might at any future period be enrolled,

The clause was agreed to, and the House being resumed, the report was brought up, and ordered to be taken farther into consideration on Monday, and to be printed.

Thursday, 27th October.

The land and malt-tax bills were read a third time, passed, and ordered to be carried to the Lords.

Friday, 28th October.

The order of the day being moved for a Committee of Supply, and the motion being made that the Speaker do now leave the chair, the House accordingly resolved itself into the said Committee, Mr. Hobart in the chair.

Mr. Chancellor PITT. The proposition I now wish to submit to the Committee is calculated in its operation to remove out of the market a great variety of navy and exchequer bills, which in consequence of having fallen to a considerable discount, tend in their present state materially to injure the public credit, to obstruct the intercourse of commerce, and impede the sources of the national prosperity. Such a measure must appear in itself so desirable, that I flatter myself that it will require but few words from me to enforce its propriety, and that its beneficial tendency will on the first view command the general assent and approbation of the House. It will be recollected that at the commencement of this war regulations were adopted that navy bills, which had before been issued for an indefinite period, should become payable at the expiration of fifteen months, bearing in the mean time an interest of 4 per cent. In consequence of this new arrangement it is evident that there must now be a certain proportion of the outstanding navy bills, payable at different periods, at the end of each month, and that all of those must be payable either in 1797, or early in the next year. Such being the case, the only question now is, Whether we shall leave this immense mass of bills to encumber the market, to obstruct the private intercourse of commerce, and to clog the wheels of general prosperity, or whether we shall offer such fair and equitable terms to the holders of those bills as they may be induced to accept, and as at the same time will produce a great and important advantage to the public? The extent of bills issued for the former year was submitted to the House in the budget of last year, as existing debt, and provision was then made for defraying the rate of interest. I also calculated a sum of four millions, in order to meet the increase of

debt, which might be contracted during the ensuing year. The amount of the debt actually incurred has, however, very far exceeded my supposed estimate. When I come to state the ways and means for the year, it will be incumbent upon me to explain what measures I mean to take, in order to defray this increase of debt. This, however, is an entirely different subject of discussion. It is now my business to state what is the whole extent of the navy bills now outstanding. If, as I propose, we shall adopt the measure to fund them down to the latest period, the whole number of navy bills amount to a sum very little less than 12 millions, of which the earliest are due within a month, and the latest at a period of fifteen months. As they become due at periods disproportionate, it is reasonable to divide them into different classes, and to offer different terms to the respective holders, calculated according to the time at which the bills are payable. In adopting a measure for this purpose, we are to consider that we are giving to the holders funds which are immediately disposable for money according to the rate at which they stand in the market in lieu of bills subject to a certain discount, and at the same time bearing an interest of 4 per cent. In adjusting therefore the amount of the bonus to be given, the point we have to consider, is the difference between the value of those bills thus burdened with a discount, and drawing an interest, and the value of those funds which we transfer to the respective holders. The next question is, What are the most proper funds to which to apply on this occasion? On consulting with those gentlemen likely to be the best informed on this subject, I have found they were of opinion that it would occasion too heavy a pressure on one particular fund, if such a large mass of bills were all to be funded in the usual way in the 5 per cents. It was proper to present a suitable encouragement to the holders, and at the same time desirable to avoid any measure which might afford an opportunity for artificial speculation. It was therefore deemed the most advisable to fund the bills in the different stocks, leaving the choice of the particular stock optional to the holders. In consequence, according to the rate of the different stocks, the smallest bonus will be given in the 3 per cents, a large bonus in the 4 per cents, and a still greater in the 5 per cents. A meeting of respectable gentlemen, considerable holders of navy bills, was two days since held in the city. They there agreed to the proposition of funding the bills upon certain terms, which I have now to propose to the Committee. [The Chancellor of the Exchequer here enumerated the respective terms to

be allowed in the different funds for the various classes of bills*. He then continued]. Without troubling the Committee farther with the details of terms, I will now shortly state the

* *The following is the account of the proceedings of the meeting which is here referred to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.*

NAVY AND EXCHEQUER BILLS.

A meeting was held yesterday at the London Tavern, of the holders of Navy and Exchequer bills, at the desire of the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank.

Mr. Giles read a letter, which he had received from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announcing his intention of funding all the Navy Bills that are outstanding on the 31st of this month, and all the Exchequer bills which have been issued in the course of 1796. He was not authorised by Mr. Pitt to offer any specific terms to the holders of these Bills, but in conjunction with the Deputy Governor of the Bank, he had made out certain propositions, which, if they met the approbation of the meeting, he would this afternoon present to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for his concurrence. The terms which he had to propose were as follow :

FOR FUNDING THE NAVY BILLS,

That they be divided into four classes :

1st Class comprehending the months of	{ October November December }	1795
2d Class comprehending the months of	{ January February March April }	1796
3d Class comprehending the months of	{ May June July }	1796
4th Class comprehending the months of	{ August September October }	1796

The bills to bear interest till the 12th of December next, and to be founded according to the price of Stocks yesterday ;

Computing the 3 per cents. at 58

———— the 4 per cents. at 75

———— the 5 per cents. at 88

The holders of the bills to have their option of any of the three kinds of stock, with the following abatements on the present prices :

For the 1st Class	{	of 2	per cent. in the 3 per cents.
		of 3	per cent. in the 4 per cents.
		of 4	per cent. in the 5 per cents.
For the 2d Class	{	of $1\frac{1}{2}$	per cent. in the 3 per cents.
		of $2\frac{1}{2}$	per cent. in the 4 per cents.
		of $3\frac{1}{2}$	per cent. in the 5 per cents.
For the 3d Class	{	of 1	per cent. in the 3 per cents.
		of 2	per cent. in the 4 per cents.
		of 3	per cent. in the 5 per cents.

average of the bonus upon all the classes of bills. It will amount to

$1\frac{1}{4}$ in the 3 per cents.

$2\frac{1}{4}$ in the 4 per cents.

$3\frac{1}{4}$ in the 5 per cents.

In addition to the outstanding navy bills, there are also Exchequer bills unfounded to the amount of two millions and a half. These Exchequer bills do not become due till the 5th of July. But in my opinion it is advisable to put them on the same footing as the navy bills. I therefore propose to fund them at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest, which, as nearly as possible, corresponds with the terms allowed for the different classes of navy bills. These measures, I am convinced, will have a very great tendency to relieve the public credit, to facilitate the operations of commerce, and to promote the general flourishing state of the country. And at the same time I cherish the idea, that whenever in future it shall be necessary to issue Exchequer bills for the public, we may be able to adopt regulations to issue them for such a period, and at such a rate of interest, as may prevent the possibility of their falling into such discount as may be attended with material loss to the public, and with injury to the national credit. I shall now conclude with moving my first resolution :

“ That provision be made for enabling His Majesty to satisfy all
“ the bills payable in course of the navy, victualling, and transport
“ offices, which were made out on or before the 27th day of Octo-
“ ber, 1796, amounting to the sum of 11,993,167l. 19s. 9d.”

For the 4th Class $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{of } \frac{1}{2} \text{ per cent. in the 3 per cents.} \\ \text{of } 1\frac{1}{2} \text{ per cent. in the 4 per cents.} \\ \text{of } 2\frac{1}{2} \text{ per cent. in the 5 per cents.} \end{array} \right.$

FOR FUNDING THE EXCHEQUER BILLS.

The bills to bear interest till the 12th of December, to be funded according to the present price of stocks (as stated above), and the holders of the bill to have their option of stock either in the 3 per cents. the 4 per cents. or the 5 per cents. with the following abatements on the present prices :

$1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the 3 per cents.

$2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the 4 per cents.

$3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the 5 per cents.

The interest on all the bills are to be made up to the 12th of December next, and the dividends to commence with the respective funds, viz.

The 3 per cent. consols. } from November last.

The 5 per cents. -

The 4 per cents. - - from Michaelmas last.

The above propositions being agreed to by the meeting, the Governor and Deputy Governor were empowered to offer them to the Minister.

Mr. HUSSEY. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated to you, that his object is to remove the Navy and Exchequer bills out of the market; but not having money to pay them off, he wishes to pay them off by way of loan. The business of the Committee, therefore, is to inquire whether the loan proposed be a right loan or not. For my own part, I readily confess that I am not in possession of sufficient information upon the subject. Before the Committee can form an accurate opinion, it will be necessary to have before them an account of the discounts on the bills in the different months. I have been told that the discount on Navy bills has been at 15 per cent. certainly at 14. If I look at the terms offered, and find that the interest paid by the public for the money amounts to this, namely, if the holders of bills take them in the 3 per cents. at $57\frac{1}{2}$, the public will then pay 6l. 2s. per cent. interest. If in the 5 per cents. 6l. 15s. per cent. The right honourable gentleman, I must suppose, is in possession of the documents necessary to furnish us with an account of the discounts, and without this account the Committee cannot, in my opinion, come to any fair decision upon the subject.

Mr. Chancellor PITT. I am sure I shall be happy to give the honourable gentleman, who spoke last, any satisfaction in my power. My view of the subject is certainly different from his. In the first place, as to the rate of discount, supposing that to be the right way of judging the subject, the honourable gentleman is stating it as if all the bills were at the highest rate of discount, whereas in fact that discount is only applicable to the bills issued at the latest period; but this does not seem to me to be the proper way of viewing the plan. We may all lament that bills have been issued for so long a date, and have been at so large a discount; and this is the reason why I propose, that in future, bills shall be issued only for short periods, in order to avoid a loss by discount. Suppose you do not fund them at all, the holders of them will have a right to demand payment, at farthest, at the end of 15 months, with interest at 4 per cent. The transaction in its nature must be optional, and if I did not propose terms more advantageous to the holder than he would obtain if he waited 15 months, I could hardly expect to get any subscription. The honourable gentleman has stated to you that if the holders fund the bills in the 3 per cents. the public will pay above 6 per cent. interest. This statement is correct; for taking the 3 per cents. at $56\frac{3}{4}$, the 4 per cents. at 73, and the 5 per cents. at 88, the public will pay little more than 5 per cent. interest.

Mr. HUSSEY. I certainly did state the highest rate of discount, but I wished for the average rate. What I complain of, is, that so high a discount has been incurred: and that the right honourable gentleman ought to have provided against it.

Mr. Chancellor PITT. It is true that I was disappointed in my attempt to prevent such a discount; but though the measures I adopted were not effectual, yet in the judgement of well-informed men, they were the most likely to be effectual. In former wars, Navy bills were issued for an indefinite period. In the last war, this was the case; they were out-standing often above two years.

In the present war, the period of payment was fixed at 15 months: this measure was deemed the most likely to maintain them at par, and at par in fact they were maintained for a considerable time. It is true that from various causes, some of them connected with the general prosperity; from the scarcity of money, that rendered the pressure upon the market heavier; from the extent of the service being so great, and from the prices of articles being so much higher than was foreseen, the naval expenditure has been larger than it was supposed it would be. Had that expenditure been foreseen, I should have tried to have prevented those evils which have occurred.

Mr. FOX. The proposition which has been submitted to the Committee, appears to me to require a good deal of explanation which we have not yet heard. With regard to the question of the debt, or whatever the right honourable gentleman may be pleased to term it, he admits that the necessity for contracting it is to be deplored. But regret is surely not the only sentiment which the House and country must feel on the present occasion. It is impossible for Members of Parliament who entertain a proper sense of the importance of the trust committed to them by their constituents, not to make some observations on that state of the country, which has so exceedingly deceived the right honourable gentleman, and which has suggested the necessity of the strange and unprecedented measures which are proposed to be adopted. In the first budget of last session, we heard of a million and half of Navy bills, in the next we heard of four millions, and now we are told of sums exceeding ten millions; and at what time did this uncertainty obtain; not at the beginning of a war, when the scale of operations might be unsettled, and the estimates of expence undefined—but at a time when many articles of provisions were at so high a price as to raise an alarm in the country respecting its dearest interests, and when they were even higher than they have been at subsequent periods. Yet the right honourable gentleman is content

with deploring the necessity which has given rise to the extravagant measure which he now proposes to adopt, and with calling upon the Committee not to look to that line of conduct by which the country has been reduced to its present situation, but to confine its views to the mode of extricating it from the difficulties under which it unfortunately labours. But it is impossible for any man in the House not to make some observations upon the general state of the finances of the country, at this moment, which I contend is wholly unexampled, and unparalleled. With respect to the subject more immediately under the consideration of the Committee, I must say a few words: and it is right to know in the first place, what interest those who received Government bills in the month of September, at 14 per cent. discount, will have for their money? I mean in respect to that class of bills which it is meant to fund, in the 5 per cents. At one time, I believe the bills were at 15 per cent. discount; but I shall compute from 14, as the medium. About sixty days ago, for 100l. they advanced 86l. In the first instance then they gained the whole discount, which was 14 per cent. In the next place, they receive $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; for I understand it is proposed to allow them $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. upon the present market price, which is 88, besides the 4 per cent. interest which they had during the sixty days. With the discount and the interest therefore they actually have, at the rate of 103l. per cent. per annum [Mr. Fox afterwards corrected the inaccuracy of this expression] for their money. This to be sure is one class, and the calculation is only applicable to a certain part of the bills: but the interest upon the rest is in an extravagant proportion. I ask then, after all that we have heard of those exhausting and ruinous systems of finance which have been adopted by other states, whether the Government of this country is at last reduced to the necessity, either from the general state of public credit, from accidental and unforeseen circumstances, or from the improvidence or extravagance of those who preside in the department of finance, to pay 103l. per cent. per annum for the money which they borrow for the public service. I ask, if this be admitted, which cannot be denied, at least with respect to one class of bills, whether when the public are obliged to borrow money at the rate of 103l. per cent. per annum, it is not incumbent upon the House of Commons, as guardians of the public money, to enter into some inquiry into the state of the finances of the country? I allow that we have no right to dictate to the holders of these bills, the terms upon which they are to be funded; nor do I object to the measure of funding them; but I cannot give into the maxim in finance more than in politics, of ap-

plying a remedy to an existing evil without taking precaution for preventing its return. While we attempt to extricate ourselves from our present embarrassments, it is our duty to take care that in future we do not fall into a situation of equal difficulty. But let us come a little nearer to the point; admitting, what cannot be questioned, that the holders of Navy bills have a right to be paid at stated periods, it certainly does not follow that when they are paid at a period considerably earlier than that at which the bills become due, that the terms offered to them now should be as good, and far less that they should be better, than they would be entitled to were they to retain the bills in their possession till the date of their payment arrived. If a person is in possession of the sum of 100l. he can vest it in the funds, he may stake it in trade, or he may employ it in a number of ways in which it may make very productive returns. But the holders of Navy or Exchequer bills must keep the bills in their possession till the terms of payment, with the profit only of 4 per cent. which was originally allowed them. To state the funding of these bills then, as contracting a new loan for the public, is an unfair representation of the transaction; and, when the subject is fairly considered, there is something on the face of the present proposition extremely singular: you are only bound by your obligation to pay 4 per cent. for your money, and you convert it into a debt for which you have to pay between five and six per cent. Those, for instance, who may choose stock in the 5 per cents. have had the good fortune to lend you money for which they receive 103l. per cent.; and to these fortunate individuals who were only entitled to 4 per cent. interest, you make the public, who have the misfortune to be their debtor, gave 1l. 18s. additional interest. I know not, for I have not calculated, what it will cost the public, but it must be an enormous expence, at a period when we shall soon be called upon in some shape or other to make very handsome efforts. In short, after borrowing money, either from misfortune or indiscretion, on the most disadvantageous terms, you add near 2 per cent. to the already exorbitant profits of the public creditor, and thus subject the public to another severe loss, in addition to those which it has before sustained. I certainly am not bound to negative the proposition, or to shew that such measures ought not to be adopted; but I consider myself as fairly entitled to demand some explanation of terms, which at first sight must strike every man as highly prejudicial to the public. As to the cause of the present embarrassed state of the public finances, the right honourable gentleman ascribes it to the increased prosperity of the country. It certainly appears to me a very paradoxical proposition

(perhaps it may not appear so strange to others who, from their situation, have had better opportunities of studying the subject), that when a country is most flourishing, there should be the greatest scarcity of circulating medium. I cannot refrain from at least starting a doubt which occurs to me upon the subject: if the present embarrassment arises merely from the want of a circulating medium, and not from any deficiency of capital, then the nominal value of every thing would be cheap; whereas we find that the nominal value of every thing is dear; so that we have this paradox to solve, that things are dearest when there is said to be the greatest abundance of every thing in the market.

I must now advert to the point how far the public are bound by the agreements which the right honourable gentleman may conclude. I know that in law they are not binding, nor is it honour which constitutes the obligation, but prudence may determine us to sanction them. How then does the present case stand? The holders of the bills have an option whether they shall accede to the terms which may have been proposed. After the House of Commons has agreed to carry into effect the transaction, the option of the holders still remains open. I should desire to know then at what time the public is considered to be bound, which is understood to take place when the report of this Committee is agreed to? [“Monday” was mentioned from the Treasury Bench].—Upon Monday, then, the House of Commons agrees to make a bargain for fourteen or fifteen millions, and becomes bound to individuals to this extent. What time, I should wish to know, are the holders to be allowed to signify their consent? I have understood that they are to intimate their determination by the 8th of November. In what situation will the House of Commons then be placed? They will be pledged to fulfil a bargain, the advantage or the disadvantage of which will depend upon the state of the stocks. Engagements of such a nature are always dangerous for the public. The public accedes to the terms upon the 1st of November, the holders of bills are free till the 8th. The public in this interval can derive no advantage from any alteration which the value of stocks may experience, while the holders have an opportunity to take advantage of any occurrence that may happen, and to regulate their conduct accordingly. This, I confess, is an inconvenience which, in some measure, is unavoidable in transactions of this nature. In peace, however, the inconvenience is slightly felt, because events which can make a decided impression upon the funds are not very likely to occur. In time of war the events which arise are more apt to produce sudden alterations. Such a period even

of war, however, may be chosen as to remove the probability of such a change. But what is the character of the present period? Is not this moment the most exposed to vicissitude which has taken place in the history of the war? Are not the fluctuations of stock more frequent, and the probabilities of change greater than at any former time? What have been the events of the last week? Have not they been of a nature clearly to evince the variation, which a period so big with events, and so important in its aspect, may produce? Into this bargain then do you enter, under the probability of great events, and the consequent change which the stocks may experience. To all the consequences of such alterations the public are pledged; while the holders of the bills are left free to avail themselves of events which may arise, and to determine themselves by the advantages they can obtain. At a time when important events are in expectation; at a period when fluctuation in the funds is more likely to occur than at any æra, has the right honourable gentleman chosen to expose the public to an inconvenience which, more or less, exists at every time, but which in such a situation is more particularly liable to be experienced. Seeing then all the disadvantages of the terms on which the right honourable gentleman proposes to conclude this transaction, I feel that it is a duty incumbent upon us to inquire into all the circumstances which are connected with it, and to demand a particular explanation of the necessity of adopting an expedient which is to be carried into effect at such an expence and sacrifice to the public. The right honourable gentleman hinted at the design of embracing some measures to prevent Navy bills from being subject to such discounts, as we have witnessed upon this and other occasions. I am extremely happy to hear that such a plan is in agitation. But the right honourable gentleman has already tried the effect of measures directed to this object. He already has limited the period for which Navy bills should be issued to 15 months. What, however, has been the consequence? At no period of the American war, when Navy bills were frequently unpaid for more than two years, when the general funds of the country were still more depressed than during the present war, when the interest upon the Navy bills that were issued did not commence till six months after their date, and when there was no fixed time for their payment, such a discount was never experienced. This point leads me to other considerations of a very important nature, and which shew that the situation of the country requires the most serious attention. What were the peculiar circumstances under which this depression of Government securities had taken place? It is when great exertions have been

made to save the public credit ; it is when, under an act of Parliament, an annual sum of one million is appropriated to the liquidation of the national debt, that we have seen this extraordinary circumstance happen. The right honourable gentleman last year took an unusual step to remove this evil. He came forward with a second loan in the month of May, which was intended to remove the floating securities from the market, and to produce a higher state of credit. Either the remedy of the right honourable gentleman did not operate to bring about the end proposed, or, what I consider to be in reality the true state of the case, the difficulties were too powerful to be subdued by the remedy. Now again you feel the same inconveniences recur. But in truth you cannot apply the remedies so fast as the difficulties thicken. Every day adds to the embarrassments ; every day plunges you deeper and deeper in perplexity, which you in vain attempt by these measures to remove. It is for this reason that I require some conviction before I can agree to the present theory, or consent to reduce it into practice at such an expence. I must have some certainty, not indeed physical certainty, but a moral certainty of some good to be obtained before I can consent to vote away the money of my constituents, and to pay 6 per cent. instead of 4. Before I agree to a measure so extraordinary and so expensive, I must have some more assurance than I yet have had of the efficacy of these expedients—some stronger proofs than I can derive from the experience of the plans of those who manage the finances of this country before I can agree to allow an addition of 1*l.* 18*s.* per cent. to be paid upon the securities of Government. I wish the Committee to consider what is the amount of this extraordinary allowance. Taking it as applying to the whole sum to be funded, it is 240,000*l.* This calculation, perhaps, does not apply to the whole of the sum, but certainly to a very considerable part of it. Last year the right honourable gentleman did not foresee this extraordinary issue of Navy bills : a great proportion of them, therefore, have more than half a year to run ; even upon this supposition, the amount of the loss to the public from this additional rate of interest is 120,000*l.* Some gentlemen may, indeed, be disposed to calculate that when so much was given by the country, so trifling an article may easily be overlooked. This, however, is not the manner in which we ought to reason. We ought to consider every thing as of importance which adds, however minutely, to the public expence and to the public burdens. We ought not to calculate this as a trifling matter when so many millions are voted away, but reflect what must be the consequence, when by giving so much, so little is left to squander. Of the pre-

sent measure I cannot approve before I know the other part of the scheme of finance which the right honourable gentleman is to employ, and the future system which he proposes to introduce. We must know every thing connected with the measure, and receive every explanation which tends to demonstrate its necessity, before we can be justified in giving our assent to an expedient which holds out terms so disadvantageous to the public; and imposes an additional 2 per cent. upon so considerable a sum.

Mr. Chancellor PITT. I rise in order to give a short explanation on some of the points just now stated by the right honourable gentleman. But I must previously remark, that he seems to consider the real and fundamental questions to be—1st, The general propriety of funding outstanding bills; and, 2dly, Whether or not this be the right moment to adopt such a measure? Yet it is somewhat extraordinary, that the rest of his speech was taken up in painting in the strongest terms, and with the utmost ingenuity, the evil of so immense a mass of floating unfunded debt. While he describes the evil in so striking a point of view, he at the same time would suffer it to continue in all its enormity, and objects to the remedy, merely because he is uncertain of its issue. While he so loudly inveighs against the great mass of outstanding debt, he not only objects to the particular remedy now proposed; he not only avoids to suggest any measure by which the inconvenience might be removed, but he argues as if the attempt to remove it would be attended with detriment to the public; and, as if it must necessarily be suffered to continue unprovided for, under all the embarrassments now experienced from its operation. But it is evident, that, while so much floating unfunded debt remains in the market subject to a considerable discount, it must not only be productive of material disadvantage to commerce, but attended with a heavy loss to the public. And, if the exigence of the service compel Government to issue more Exchequer bills, under the depreciated state of those already in the market, the loss may be infinitely greater than the amount of the bonus allowed in order to take the bills out of circulation. The question then is not to be considered on narrow and contracted grounds, but on a wide and comprehensive scale. The effect of this immense mass of floating unfunded debt is to be examined as it acts upon public credit, and on commercial speculation, on the actual resources, and the future prospects of the country. The right honourable gentleman has talked largely of the advantage that will accrue to individuals from the proposed measure. Granting his statement to be just, it would surely be a strange policy, because even an unreasonable advantage might accrue to individuals,

not to take a great and essential benefit to the public. The right honourable gentleman says that we are not bound to pay 100l. now, that we are only legally bound to pay at the rate of 4 per cent. interest. After all, what is the mighty difference? we are not bound indeed to pay 100l. to day, but we are bound to pay 102l. or 103l. within the period of seven months. This reasoning is in no point applicable to the principal consideration of providing a remedy for an evil which is at present attended with so much embarrassment and inconvenience. The question properly to be considered is, What is the proportion which the value now given for these bills holds to the rate of interest accumulating during a period of seven months? It will be found to be no more than paying a present value to the holder of the bills proportioned to his certain and vested right at the end of that period. The right honourable gentleman states, that you are paying a bonus of 2 per cent. above the rate of the legal interest. He has dwelt upon this sum as if that was to be considered as a perpetual interest, which is only to be paid in the proportion of short successive periods, according to the different classes of the bills. The bonus even in the highest case is only 1l. 18s. The right honourable gentleman chose to take the extreme case; and after all, this is the extent of that bonus of which he has so loudly complained, and so greatly magnified. But he states the present to be a bad time for adopting such a measure; he considers it as a weighty objection that you are bound by the terms which you offer to the holders of those bills, while they are free either to accept or reject them. If this is an inconvenience, it is one which must always be experienced when recourse is had to the measure of funding, and which can only be obviated by a determination never to fund any part of the public debt. It is an inconvenience which is unavoidably connected with the nature of the system. The question is, Whether you will continue the evil with all its present inconveniencies for a longer period of fifteen months, rather than make one effort to remove at once the cause of all the embarrassment; and restore the sources of national prosperity to their natural channel? The right honourable gentleman objects also to the present moment on account of the particular state of public affairs, and the fluctuation likely to arise from that situation. If we selected a week for the purpose of offering terms for the holders, the probable events of which might be expected to occasion a greater than ordinary degree of fluctuation, that circumstance would unquestionably be a fair ground of objection. Certainly a period of war is particularly calculated to call forth a spirit of speculation, and the existence of a negotiation may be stated to give double force

to this propensity. But does the right honourable gentleman carry his objections to the particular period so far as to suppose that you are not to take measures during the continuance of a war to remedy a great source of public inconvenience? I, on the contrary, feel that, possessing abundant and powerful resources to carry on the war, it becomes you to exert your energy to remove an evil which may cripple your resources and enfeeble your efforts. I am convinced that, when that evil is removed, you will find no deficiency of abundant means of exertion, and that the prosperity of your situation will be such as to inspire you with additional grounds of confidence. It is therefore that I consider this as a measure highly fitting to be adopted during a period of war. Nor do I consider it as a measure less eligible in another view of our situation in the prospect of peace. It cannot surely be expected that at the very commencement of a negotiation of so momentous a nature, and so extensive in its relations, any occurrence should take place within the short period of a week decisive of its issue. He must, indeed, reason at an extraordinary and unaccountable rate who calculates on such an event. However sanguine in my own wishes for the auspicious return of tranquillity, I cannot admit that the discussions of the great and important interests of Great Britain and her allies, and of those weighty and complicated points which they necessarily involve, are likely to be so speedily decided or brought within so short a compass as to have any influence on the present measure. There is, indeed, one possible case which I reluctantly notice, and which I sincerely trust will, in the present instance, be averted, which might render the result of negotiation matter of such speedy issue, namely, that some occurrences should take place, or some proposition be started in its very outset, of such a nature as at once to put a negative on all our hopes of peace, and to preclude for the present farther proceedings. But if we shall be ultimately successful in the grand object of all our wishes, it is not the space of a single week which can give any definitive turn to the complexion of negotiation, far less decide the important issue. But if from the magnitude and importance of the questions to be discussed, it should be necessary to adopt a plan of negotiation more extensive, and likely to be protracted for a considerable period, is it reasonable that during all the time we should submit to the pressure of an evil which, so long as it exists, must continue to weigh down our prosperity, and which we possess the means instantly to remove, if we have only the energy to exert them.

Are we in the mean time to exhibit to the enemy that picture of distress and embarrassment which is the consequence of this

evil, and which, though originating in a temporary cause, so deeply affects our resources by its operation, while it depends only on ourselves to apply the remedy? The very circumstance of negotiation is an additional reason why we should free ourselves of every source of embarrassment that may fetter our own operations, or encourage those with whom we treat to rise in their demands. In this point of view, I consider this measure as an equally desirable preliminary, whatever may be the future situation of the country:—if we are compelled to prosecute the war, it will add vigour and confidence to our resources; and, on the other hand, it will enable us to enjoy the full extent of the blessings of peace, if we shall succeed in effecting the restoration of peace on the only terms on which I can possibly desire it to be restored—terms in every respect fair and equitable, and adequate to the just pretensions of the country. I am very confident, that, when the present measure shall be adopted, all the beneficial consequences which I have now attempted to describe will be experienced in their utmost extent. The right honourable gentleman asks me to explain what he terms a paradox, as applied to the situation of this country, namely, that a high degree of prosperity may be a cause of temporary embarrassment. I consider the proposition as so obvious and simple, that I shall employ only a few words to account for the opinion I hold on the subject. My criterions of the general prosperity of the country, notwithstanding the pressure of temporary embarrassment, are, first, that while the funds were sensibly affected from the scarcity of money, the revenue still continued high; and during a period of war, approached very nearly to what it had been in the most flourishing æra of peace. Secondly, the credit of British merchants remained on the most respectable footing, notwithstanding the difficulties of the time; and this reputation was supported not by confining themselves to a contracted scale of trade, but by launching into the most extensive operations of commerce, and even by enlarging the sphere of their former industry, and opening new sources of wealth to the country. These are unequivocal symptoms of the actual wealth and prosperity of the country. But it is evident that in proportion to the extension of trade, and the increase of capital, the expenditure becomes the greater. In proportion to the magnitude of the machine must be the means required to put it in motion. Besides, it is to be recollected, that the sums which were necessary to carry on the war abroad tended to diminish the amount of the circulating medium at home. I trust I have now explained the supposed paradox, that some degree of temporary embarrassment may be connected with a high state of general prosperity; that I have even

proved that in proportion to the rapid augmentation of commerce, the pressure which is experienced for the moment may be more severe. By adopting the present measure, I am however convinced that we shall in a great degree remove the cause of the evil, and give new life and vigour to our resources. It is a measure which I believe to be wise and proper, either in the prospect of peace, or in the certainty of determined war; but which above all I believe to be wise and expedient, in the precise state in which we now stand, while we are going on with a war, and while a negotiation is just begun. And in this view I can only regard the objections which the right honourable gentleman has urged with respect to the time, as arguments in favour of the measure. The effect of removing those bills altogether out of the market, will infallibly be to take away from individuals the temptation which the rate of discount at which they stood presented to purchasers, so greatly to the detriment of the public; to induce them to lay out their money in the funds, or to employ it for the purposes of commerce, which may afford them the prospect of still greater profit. The consequence must be to increase the quantity of circulating medium, to advance the state of public credit, and to facilitate the operations of commerce. And with such great and important objects in view, it will surely ill become us to hesitate in adopting the measure, or to sacrifice the decided interests of the nation, in order to prevent a gain to individuals.

Mr. FOX. One part of my observation upon this subject was for illustration merely; but the right honourable gentleman has taken notice of it, and rested an argument upon as if I had treated the additional 2 per cent. as a permanent burden upon the public. I stated that part of the case distinctly otherwise. The right honourable gentleman asks me, Would I never fund Navy and Exchequer Bills? There is but one way of answering a question thus broadly put. This particular case is like every other extraordinary one—to be governed by its own circumstances. My opinion is, that if it be necessary to issue Navy Bills to any very considerable amount, and Parliament should adopt a shorter period for the payment of them than has hitherto been done; it will be more convenient to pay them when they become due than it has hitherto been, because they will not be liable to the same fluctuation, nor depend so much on the state of the funds as they have hitherto done. But it is one thing to state generally—you should never fund your Navy Bills; and another to fund them under circumstances highly disadvantageous to the public. Such it appears to me to be the case at the present time, should the measure be adopted which is now

proposed. This is a distinction to which the right honourable gentleman did not advert. He took notice, however, of another part of what I submitted to the Committee. He says I rested on the 5 per cents. in order to strike the House as the most excessive part of the plan which is now before us; whereas it is probable the holders of bills will invest in the other funds, the 4 and 3 per cents. Very likely; but then I say if they do I shall take it for granted they adopt that fund that appears to them to be the most to their advantage; and therefore there was nothing unfair in my taking the 5 per cents. as a mere illustration, the more especially as the holders of the bills are to chuse the fund in which they will have their property invested. The right honourable gentleman says he is sorry for the enormous profits which some individuals have made by those bills. I am neither sorry nor glad for what has attended speculation; as far as the interest of individuals is concerned, I am not sorry that individuals have had large profits upon their commercial dealings; but I am sorry that the public are obliged to sustain enormous losses. The right honourable gentleman then brings forward a great deal on the peculiar propriety of the measure before us, on account of the negociation which is now going forward, or rather opened. I waited for every word with anxiety—what did I hear? “That at such a period you should display your resources to the enemy.” This is not the first time I have heard this made use of as an argument in favour of the measure which the Minister proposed to this House; did he not make use of the same expression when the last loan was discussed in this House? A loan which was attended with circumstances much too strong and singular in their nature to be forgotten. Did he not say at that moment, that the loan was necessary, in order to shew the enemy the strength of our resources? I did not give much credit then to assertions of that nature. But what credit can I give to them now? The right honourable gentleman said, upon the discussion of that loan, that the enemy were deceived with respect to the difficulty we had in raising money to carry on the war; that it was material to us that we should negotiate that loan, and at that time, although the terms were disadvantageous to the public, because it was material the French should know the flourishing state of our finances; and therefore it was that he negotiated that loan. Why not do so now? Has the necessity of making the enemy acquainted with the flourishing state of our finances ceased? Are we now so much more convinced of the prosperous condition of our affairs than we were at that moment? Are the French so much more convinced? Is Europe so much more convinced of the

prosperity of our condition—of our ability to borrow thirty or forty millions more, without inconvenience, that it is now unnecessary to boast of it? Is that the reason why a loan is not brought forward at this moment? Is that the reason why the Minister does not come forward at the hour of negotiation, to shew to the enemy the prosperous condition of our finances? I should have thought, that if the Minister was sincere in his proposition last year, that he wanted the loan at that time, and on the terms he concluded it, only for the purpose of shewing the extent of our resources, he would have pursued the same plan now; for certainly there never was a period in which it was more essential for us that the enemy should be of opinion that our resources are extensive, than at the present moment. But what will be the inference from the measure which is now before you? It will tend to beget a conclusion directly the reverse of that for which the right honourable gentleman expressed such anxiety on the last loan; by the present step you are taking, you only shew a part of the state of your finance, and that in so unfavourable a light as to induce the suspicion that you yourselves know the enemy would exult if you made a real discovery of the whole of your condition. The right honourable gentleman did not like the mode in which my honourable friend treated this subject; he did not approve of the idea of calling it a loan, and yet he treated it himself in the way of a loan, when he talked of the bonus. I call it a loan with a very extravagant bonus. The right honourable gentleman then touched on a topic, in which we are all too much interested not to feel a considerable degree of anxiety; he says, that in a week we are not likely to have any news to raise the funds. I am sorry for it; that is a subject which I do not mean to discuss now, because I have no wish to say any thing that might possibly impede the progress of negotiation; but I cannot help thinking that in any point of view the subject may be considered, the hopes of the public must have operated to a certain extent upon the funds since the negotiation was opened; for surely the sound of the word peace, from such authority as it came from lately, must have acted upon the hopes of a considerable part of the public. The right honourable gentleman seems to think otherwise. I shall say no more upon that subject, for reasons that I dare say are obvious to the Committee, and I have said thus much upon it, for reasons which I trust are equally obvious. The right honourable gentleman in the latter part of his speech attempted to support a particular theory. I know not whose theory it is on which he acts and attempts to reason, but it appears to me to be a very questionable, if not delusive theory. He observes that this

country has felt a temporary distress in its finances, from the extension of its commerce, that is, that its present apparent distress arises out of its greatly increasing wealth. I do not say that is impossible. I have no experience upon that subject. I know of no country (except ours, if it be in that state), that has ever manifested its increasing wealth by its distresses. However, I mean to say no more than that I will endeavour to examine a doctrine that does not seem to me to be very rational. An opportunity will occur, I hope, for the discussion of that point, as it applies to the state of this country; and if it should, I believe this will turn out to be the case—some part of the distress will appear to have been imaginary, and such also, I fear, will be the case with regard to our wealth. I say this the more confidently, because every thing that has happened lately, has been alledged as a proof of the prosperity of this country. I really know of no public event that has happened since the commencement of this war that has not been quoted as a proof of the increase of our wealth. That sort of argument that proves every thing; that mode of reasoning which makes every thing come to one point in human affairs, is, I confess, that for which I have no great esteem. Some year ago, certain individuals of extensive commercial concerns were very much embarrassed. A parliamentary measure was adopted for their relief. Upon that occasion, I remember, we were told, “It is true that the credit of some individuals indeed is low, but the public credit is higher than it ever was before this period; nay, it is the increase of the national wealth that is the cause of this temporary embarrassment!” A change has taken place; now the public credit has fallen, and every thinking man in the kingdom “is alarmed at the state of it, and we are told, that true it is the public credit is lowered—but then look at the credit of individuals in commerce—it is from their condition the real state of the country is to be estimated;” that is to say, that which was worth nothing formerly as an argument, is now worth every thing; and what was formerly worth every thing is now worth nothing. This mode of reasoning, I own, does not make a very deep impression upon me. All these conjectures lead to no fixed conclusion. The only certainty we have is, that this country has for a long time borne most enormous burdens, which are now most enormously increasing; and all that we hear concerning our ability to bear our burdens are mere speculations upon future advantages.

The right honourable gentleman said, that if we are to continue to issue our Navy bills, they shall be issued under different terms from what they have been accustomed to be. I did not understand

him clearly upon that subject. I do not know whether he means to have a substitute for Navy bills. We ought to know the plan to be pursued in future upon that subject, in order that we may determine whether this measure will co-operate with that plan, and whether in any degree they can be made to assist each other. If the right honourable gentleman has any plan of issuing Navy bills payable at a shorter period than they have ever hitherto been paid, I shall approve of it in one particular. I mean the shortness of the time of payment. But I am of opinion it would be necessary to include in that law the whole of the Navy bills, because the force of that law, on such bills as are included in it, will tend to diminish the discount on those that are not. The right honourable gentleman alluded to an effect which the measure now proposed already had produced—the discount had already been diminished upon Navy bills—most wonderful that such a measure should have had such an effect! What other effect did he expect it to have? Indeed there required not half the sagacity of the right honourable gentleman to make that discovery. The Minister has not stated what he means to do in future with respect to Navy bills, or any other Government security. Before we enter upon a plan so large as this is, we ought to know a great deal more than is yet confided to us. Suppose he continues his old way of issuing Navy bills—does any intelligent man think that this measure will diminish the discount upon Government bills in future? Should he be so unfortunate for some years to come, in all transactions of this nature, as he has been of late years, what distress must this country suffer! The whole of this subject, and many general topics connected with it, were before this House last year; upon which occasion an honourable friend of mine did himself great credit. He stated most ably the inconvenience of this mode of raising money, both for the army and navy. The political and commercial effects he shewed, to my conviction, would be most ruinous, of which the proposition now before you is an incontestable proof. That to a certain degree the evil was inevitable I am willing to allow; but there have been no peculiar circumstances in the course of the last year of this war, which Ministers can fairly say went beyond the ordinary course of calculation as to the expences of this country. There are many reasons for expecting that their calculations should in that instance have been nearly correct. I do not mean so much to oppose the whole of the measure before you, as I desire to demur to the execution of it, until the Minister shall have laid before us much more information as to his plan of finance than we possess at present.

Mr. HUSSEY said that the present measure would not tend to

take money out of the market, for it was only withdrawing one species of paper security by giving another. He had heard it reported the Navy bills in question were not issued for naval service, but for the purpose of raising money to be applied to other subjects, and he should be glad to hear this report contradicted from authority?

Mr. Chancellor **PITT** said, that he was not aware that there was any foundation for the report.

Mr. **HUSSEY** wished to know expressly whether any money had been applied to services for which it was not intended by Parliament? To this no answer was made.

Sir **W. PULTENEY** differed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the operation which he expected from taking the whole of the Navy bills out of the market, by this measure of funding them. He did not think it would by any means answer the end proposed. The right honourable gentleman had truly stated the evil arising from so many millions of Navy bills floating in the market; but the causes were, in his opinion, deserving of the most mature consideration. The vast sums of money which had been sent out of the country had, among many other concurrent circumstances, contributed very greatly to the diminution of the circulating medium. This diminution had occasioned not only considerable fluctuations in the funds, but had been a great cause of the discount on Navy bills having risen to such an enormous height. He did not think that the measure of funding the whole of the Navy bills would by any means answer the purpose for which it was intended, nor that it would have the effect to prevent any Navy bills which might be issued in future from incurring as high a discount as those of the present day. In proof of this he referred the Committee to the measures which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken for the express purpose of keeping down the discount on those very Navy bills during the last session. What was the consequence? Had they kept down the discounts on those bills which had been issued since? No. The very reverse was the case. Those discounts had risen to the present extravagant pitch. It was clear to him therefore that funding the whole of the Navy bills at once was a measure that was wrong. Where an evil was occasioned by a very great diminution in the circulating medium, the only true remedy would lie in providing a means of increasing that circulating medium. By taking Government securities out of the market no alteration in the quantity of the circulating medium was effected. What was obtained by a loan in one way was returned in another. It was necessary to increase the circulating medium, and render the quantity equal to the demand; to effect this, all juggling tricks and

pretended expedients were of no avail. To produce this effect the operation of commerce was slow. He did not think that the present measure, though attended with such an exorbitant expence, and such disadvantageous terms, would produce the desired effect. Till the quantity of circulating medium was increased, nothing could keep up the value of Navy bills. The honourable gentleman should have tried the effect of the principle of competition which he had extolled in other cases. He should have offered four millions to be funded in the first place, and allowed a competition to take place among the holders. In this case he was convinced that a better bargain might have been made. Upon this occasion the right honourable gentleman had been misled. He had an opportunity of obliging a number of individuals, though he did not believe this was the motive of his conduct. He was convinced, however, that the measure would not produce the effect intended.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he always heard with respect whatever fell from the honourable Baronet, though he could not help differing from him on the present occasion, and in the opinion which he held on this subject, he believed he agreed with every monied man in the country with whom he had ever conversed. It was well known that Navy bills floating in the market were held by persons in the metropolis, and absorbed a quantity of capital; but when funded, were diffused over the kingdoms, and employed what arose from the profits of industry and commerce in different places.

The first question was then put and carried.

The Chairman then put the second question,

“ That provision be made for enabling His Majesty to satisfy
 “ all the Exchequer bills made out by virtue of an act of last ses-
 “ sion of Parliament, for enabling His Majesty to raise the sum of
 “ 2,500,000*l.* for the uses and purposes therein mentioned,”

Which was likewise carried; and the House being resumed, the report was ordered to be received on Monday.

Monday, 31st October.

The report of the Committee of Supply was brought up on funding the Navy and Exchequer bills.

Mr. FOX. As I understand that the House will have the terms of this bargain more specifically stated in the Committee of Ways and Means, I will reserve for that Committee any observations I have to make on the subject.

The order of the day was read for a Committee of Ways and Means, and the amount of the issue of Exchequer bills, and the esti-

mate of the Navy debt were ordered to be submitted to the said Committee. Mr. Hobart in the chair.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that having already stated his ideas on the subject now under the consideration of the Committee, he should reserve himself till he had heard what farther objections might be urged to the proposed measure, and should simply move the necessary resolutions :

I. That all persons entitled to any Navy, Victualing, and Transport bills, which were made out on or before the 31st of December, 1795, who shall on or before the 12th day of November, 1796, carry the same, (having had the interest computed and marked at the Navy, Victualling, and transport offices to the 16th of December, 1796) to the Treasurer of the Navy to be marked and certified to the Bank, shall, in their option, be intitled for every 100l. of such bills to

178l. 11s. 5d. 3 per cent. annuities, to commence 5th July, 1796,
or to

138l. 17s. 9½d. 4 per cent. annuities, to commence 10th October,
1796, or to

119l. os. 11¼d. 5 per cent. annuities, to commence 5th July, 1796,
to be payable half yearly out of the consolidated fund.

II. That the bills which were made out after the 31st December, 1795, and on or before the 30th April, 1796, shall in their option be intitled for every 100l. of such bills to

176l. 19s. 9¾d. 3 per cent. annuities, to commence 5th July, 1796,
or to

137l. 18s. 7¼d. 4 per cent. annuities, to commence 10th October,
1796, or to

118l. os. 10½d. 5 per cent. annuities, to commence 5th July, 1796,
to be payable half yearly out of the consolidated fund.

III. That the bills which were made out after the 30th April, 1796, and before the 31st July 1796, shall in their option be intitled for every 100l. of such bills to

175l. 8s. 9d. 3 per cent. annuities, to commence 5th July, 1796,
or to

136l. 19s. 8½d. 4 per cent. annuities, to commence 10th October,
1796, or to

117l. 12s. 11¼d. 5 per cent. annuities, to commence 5th July, 1796,
to be payable half yearly out of the consolidated fund.

IV. The same bills which were made out after the 31st July, 1796, and before the 27th October, 1796, shall in their option be intitled for every 100l. of such bills to

173l. 18s. 3d. 3 per cent. annuities, to commence 5th July, 1796,
or to

136l. 18s. 1d. 4 per cent. annuities, to commence 10th October
1796, or to

116l. 19s. 2d. 5 per cent. annuities, to commence 5th July, 1796,
to be payable half yearly out of the consolidated fund.

V. That all persons intitled to Exchequer bills made out pursuant to act of last session for raising 2,500,000 by a vote of credit, who shall on or before the 12th day of November, 1796, carry the same to the Paymas-

ter of Exchequer bills, shall receive a certificate intitling such person at his option for every 100l. of such bills to

176l. 19s. 9½d. 3 per cent. annuities, commencing 5th July, 1796, or to

137l. 18s. 7½d. 4 per cent. annuities, commencing 10th October, 1796, or to

118l. 6s. 10½d. 5 per cent. annuities, commencing 5th July, 1796, to be paid half yearly out of the consolidated fund.

Mr. FOX. When a conversation rose on this subject on a former day, I then considered it as my duty to state to the Committee some considerations which weighed strongly in my mind; first, on the ruinous tendency of extending this system beyond all precedent in former times, even the most critical, which this country has ever witnessed: secondly, on the disadvantageous nature of the particular terms, on which this bargain is proposed to be concluded. Since that time I have had more leisure to consider the subject; I have also had an opportunity to consult gentlemen perfectly conversant in such questions, and to avail myself of their information. I am now, therefore, enabled to speak with greater confidence as to the particular terms of the bargain.

In my former calculations with respect to the rate of interest to the holders of Navy bills, I calculated it at 103 per cent. In this point I admit that I took the extreme case, and also that I made a small mistake in the use of the words per cent. I ought not to have calculated it at 103 per cent. but at the rate of 103 upon 85 or 86.

The following is the accurate calculation of the interest made on a Navy bill bought two months ago at 15 per cent. discount, supposing it to be funded according to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's plan, in the 5 per cents. at 2½ per cent. below the market price of 88:

Interest on 100l. for 60 days, at 4 per cent.	—	—	£. 0 13 2
Interest on ditto, from the 30th of October to the 12th of	}	—	0 9 5
December, being 43 days,			
Premium of 2½ per cent. on each 100l. stock, in the 5	}	—	2 16 0
per cents. valued at 88, or on 114l. stock, which is			
equivalent to 100l. in money,	}	—	15 0 0
Discount at 15 per cent.			
			<hr/>
			18 18 7
			<hr/>

This sum being allowed on 85l. (the purchase money of the Navy bill) is equal to an interest on 100l. of 22l. 5s. 5d.

If therefore the interest for 60 days is 22l. 5s. 5d. the interest for a whole year, or 365 days, will be 135l. 9s.

It now turns out from this calculation, that instead of 103, the

interest at the rate of a whole year amounts to 135; when bargains are made on such extravagant terms, examples of profusion may cease to strike the public mind with surprise, and the difference between 103 and 135 may be but little heeded. But, is the number of those bills which are to be funded on such enormous terms so very small, is the state of the country such as to enable it to conclude a bargain on terms so extraordinary and unprecedented? The right honourable gentleman deploras the necessity which renders such a measure necessary; in my mind it is not enough to deplore the necessity which is attended with an evil of such magnitude: we ought also to seek the means to prevent it in future. On former occasions the right honourable gentleman himself was not the slowest to reprobate such instances of abuse; he was himself, in 1782, the Member of a Committee to examine into the state of public accounts, and to detect any instance of misconduct in the financial operations of Ministers. Of this circumstance he was reminded by an honourable friend of mine, (Mr. Grey,) the Member for Northumberland, whose absence on the present occasion I regret; but whom at all times I can only regard with the highest sentiments of respect, admiration and esteem. When he was reminded by that honourable friend how far he had since deviated from the principles he professed, and the conduct he had adopted in 1782, his only defence was an appeal to similar instances of abuse which had formerly been practised; but in the present instance, he cannot even set up this ground of justification. He will not surely contend that Navy bills have ever at any former period been issued to such an extent. It is necessary only to refer to the experience of last year; it must appear a most extraordinary and unprecedented fact, that there should have been issued Navy bills to the amount of not less than eight millions more than had been foreseen in the calculations of the right honourable gentleman. If the public service called for such an immense sum, it was surely incumbent upon him even to have faced the inconvenience of calling together Parliament at an unusual period, in order to obtain their sanction to raise the necessary supplies. He ought for two reasons to have adopted this measure of assembling Parliament at such a crisis; first, to avoid the danger of the precedent of raising money to such an unlimited extent without the regular sanction of the Guardians of the public purse; secondly, to prevent those ruinous terms of interest, with which the bargain for so large a sum must ultimately be attended to the public. I now come to advert to the particular terms. On the face of the bargain itself there always appeared to me something singular in the different rates offered to the holders of the bills. It is evident

that the increase of the capital must be very different according to the different stocks, and that also the quantum of annuity must be very different on the same principle. The right honourable gentleman and myself formerly differed on the question, "Whether, in the system of funding, it was better for the public to make the interest light or to increase the capital?" I was rather disposed to think that to extend the capital was a less evil than to burden the public with a heavy interest. I suspect, however, that all our difference on this question was only with respect to the quantum. And as I would consider it adviseable to make a small addition to the interest in order to diminish the capital, so the right honourable gentleman would also think it right somewhat to extend the capital in order to alleviate the pressure of interest. The sinking-fund bill has undoubtedly made some difference in the question: But what is the result which I now wish to submit to the Committee? The natural result of this reasoning, with respect to capital and interest evidently is, that in proportion as the capital is extended, the interest ought to be low, and, vice versa, in proportion as the capital is diminished, the interest ought to be increased. No proposition can be more obvious than this; yet, when in the present instance I applied it to the different rates of capital and interest in the different bills proposed to the holders of the bills, I found directly the reverse to be the case. This will appear from the following comparison of the statement of the rates of capital and annuity, calculated in the different classes of the terms offered to the respective holders of the bills.

FIRST CLASS.

Interest.

Navy bill of 100l. funded in the 3 per cents.	£.	s.	£.	s.	d.
at 56, will create in stock a debt of —	178	12	5	7	1
Ditto in the 4 per cents. at 72 —	138	18	5	11	1
Ditto in the 5 per cents. at 84 —	119	1	5	19	0

SECOND CLASS.

Navy bill of 100l. funded in the 3 per cents.					
at 56½, will create in stock a debt of —	177	0	5	6	2
Ditto in the 4 per cents. at 72½ —	137	18	5	10	4
Ditto in the 5 per cents. at 84½ —	118	7	5	18	4

THIRD CLASS.

Navy bills of 100l. funded in the 3 per cents.					
at 57, will create in stock a debt of —	175	14	5	5	3
Ditto in the 4 per cents. at 73 —	137	0	5	9	7
Ditto in the 5 per cents. at 85 —	117	13	5	17	8

FOURTH CLASS.

Navy bill of 100l. funded in the 3 per cents.					
at 57½, will create in stock a debt of —	173	18	5	4	4
Ditto in the 4 per cents. at 73½ —	136	1	5	8	10
Ditto in the 5 per cents. at 85½ —	116	19	5	17	0

FIRST CLASS.

Diff. of Int.

Excess of stock funded in the 3 per cents. above the 4 per cents.	£. s.	£. s.
	39 14	4 0
Ditto above the 5 per cents.	59 11	12 0

SECOND CLASS.

In proportion to the difference in the first class, the difference of interest should have been

S. d.

3 11 Excess of stock funded in the 3 per cents. above the 4 per cents.	39 2	4 2
11 10 Ditto above the 5 per cents.	58 13	12 2

THIRD CLASS.

3 11 Excess of stock funded in the 3 per cents. above the 4 per cents.	38 14	4 4
11 10 Ditto above the 5 per cents.	58 1	12 5

FOURTH CLASS.

3 10 Excess of stock funded in the 3 per cents. above the 4 per cents.	37 17	4 6
11 6 Ditto above the 5 per cents.	59 19	12 8

This statement suggests many observations. If the capital is right, the difference of interest must be wrong. In the first class, the difference between the 3 per cents. and the 4 per cents. is 39l. 14s. the annuity is only four shillings. So that, in return for this capital of 39l. 14s. the public are only compensated by an annuity of four shillings. In the first class, the difference of capital between the 4 per cents. and the 5 per cents. is 59l. 11s. the difference of interest is 12s. The Committee must here perceive the striking inequality between the rates of capital and interest in the 3 and the 5 per cents. as affects the principle of capital and interest. But, in order to render the deviation from this principle still more apparent, let us compare the rates in the 5 per cents. of the first and fourth class. In the first class, the difference of capital between the 4 and 5 per cents. is 59l. 11s. the difference of interest is 12s. in the fourth class, the difference of capital is 56l. 19s. the difference of interest is 12s. 8d. It cannot be necessary to say any thing farther with respect to the terms. I am indeed wholly at a loss to account upon what principle of calculation, or upon what ground of policy this measure can be supported. For I contend, that if the rates in the first class are arranged upon any rational principle, those in the fourth in the corresponding funds must

be absurd in the extreme. Either, in the first class, you extend your capital beyond the proper bounds, or, in the fourth, you sacrifice too much interest.

However difficult it may be to arrange the degrees of those terms, that business, I think, ought to be submitted to the decision of Parliament, and not left to the discretion of the stockholders. Instead of adopting the regular proportion, and calculating downwards, a directly contrary mode of calculation has been employed. The difference of interest is made greater in proportion as the capital is less, and, vice versa, in proportion as the capital is greater, the interest is less.

In the course of the discussion on this subject, we have repeatedly heard of the term *bonus*. The frequent introduction of this term bonus, upon this occasion, I for one have not considered to be very regular or auspicious. In borrowing of large sums at all times the necessity of a bonus is a matter of very serious consideration to the country, and forms no small addition to the pressure of public burdens; but let us consider the particular nature and circumstances of the present transaction. We shall find in this instance the hardship greatly increased, and the pressure doubly severe. Let us consider that those bills are originally issued at a discount of 7, 10, and ultimately of 14 and 15 per cent. In what light can this be considered but as a bonus? And after this enormous bonus, not at a period when you are borrowing, but when you are taking measures to pay what you have borrowed, you think necessary to give so much additional bonus. At most you can only state that this bonus is given in order to induce the holders to change the form of their security from the public. Is it possible not to foresee the consequence of such a proceeding in great financial operations? and such is the present situation of this country, that it is only to great financial operations we can look in order adequately to meet the public exigencies. Ought we not, in discussing such a measure, to advert a little to the resources of the country? Great and powerful as those resources may be, they must be nothing less than inexhaustible, if they are able to stand the effect of a repetition of such measures, particularly at a period when we know not how often or to what extent we may be required to give our sanction to fresh loans for the public service. How long is it fitting that the public should be called upon to buy up debt on such profuse and enormous terms? Good God, is it not a considerable bonus, when Navy bills are bought up at 9 per cent. discount, and are now to be paid without any discount at all? But here I am told of the inconvenience of suffering such an immense mass of floating debt to remain unfunded

in the market. I am told of the consequent scarcity of circulating medium, and of the important relief which will in this respect be afforded by removing those bills out of the market. I am not much disposed to reason confidently on any hypothesis with respect to the circulating medium. The result of almost every hypothesis has shown that such reasonings are conducted very much in the dark. In 1793 there was the same complaint of the want of a circulating medium. In order to remedy the deficiency, five millions of Exchequer bills were then issued. Now as a remedy for the same evil, it is proposed to take a certain quantity of unfunded bills out of the market. But the true cause of this scarcity of circulating medium, and of all the consequent embarrassment is, that we are expending fifty or sixty millions annually. It is to this enormous rate of expenditure we are to look as the real cause of the distress, and not to any partial and theoretical evil, which it is thus at different times, as suits the purpose of a Minister, proposed to meet by remedies diametrically opposite. But we are told that the evil day will come at last, and that it will be necessary to pay those bills at different intervals, of six, seven, or twelve months. I say then, rather borrow now on any terms, than submit to the unprecedented measure of buying up debt at such an enormous rate. I am not inclined to speculate on the future state of public credit, but I am not sanguine enough to hope that if such measures as the present are adopted, it will be much improved at a future period. Do not, however, let us adopt the language, "Let us make any terms we can now, for we shall afterwards be obliged to make worse." I trust that this is not the justification of the present measure, and yet I see no other which can readily be adopted. What the credit of the country may be at a future period must necessarily depend on various causes, on the events of war, on the probability of peace, or on the length of time during which there is a prospect that the war may be continued. My opinion is, that the adoption of such measures as the present will tend more to injure the credit of the country than any other expedient which possibly could be employed. Nothing can more effectually contribute to aggravate the public distress than the attempt to conceal its real cause, to account for it by illusive and fallacious theories, and to meet it by partial and inefficient remedies. If we wish suitably to provide for the exigency of the crisis, and to redress the existing evils, let us not have recourse to empty hypothesis, or to contradictory expedients. Let us raise the public income to the scale of the public expenditure, or let us confine the expenditure within the limits of the income. We may thus expect to remedy the deficiency of the circulating medium, and to remove

the embarrassment which is in consequence experienced, which, while we persevere in our present system of unlimited confidence, and ruinous profusion, we never can hope to effect by listening to vague theories, or, by adopting opposite expedients, to redress the same evil.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that though he should not detain the Committee for any length of time in what he had to offer, he should endeavour to follow the right honourable gentleman through the principal points upon which he had touched. He was happy to have found an opportunity of explaining the true point of view in which the present measure was to be considered, and to reply to the exaggerated statements and highly-coloured representations which the right honourable gentleman had made. The first statement given by the right honourable gentleman of the interest which the holders of Navy bills would receive on a certain proportion of the bills, was at the rate of 103l. per cent. but he had now corrected his statement and found that it amounted to 130l. While it was admitted that this was an extreme case, the right honourable gentleman, however, had represented the calculation as applicable to a considerable part of the debt. This *corrected* statement the right honourable gentleman would find it necessary to correct, if he examined with accuracy the whole of the circumstances upon which it was founded. With regard to the principle upon which the subject was to be viewed, it was understood that the holder of Navy bills had no security that the payment of the sums for which they were received would be made in less than fifteen months. If the public however finds it convenient to discharge them in six weeks, or any other period less than that for which they were originally issued, was it fair to calculate as a profit on one month what from this circumstance arose upon a bill which the holder had received as payable at fifteen months? Was it fair to represent the credit of the country as in a general state of depreciation, because individuals might receive a profit which they had not in their contemplation, and which could in no degree be considered as the motive from which the security was taken, nor the rate at which Government was supplied? But even had his statement been true as to the general complexion which it gave to the credit of the country, which the right honourable gentleman had laboured to prove so greatly depreciated, it could not justify him in concluding that the credit of Government securities was lower than at any former period. Did the right honourable gentleman think that at the present period Navy Bills were at the highest discount which they had ever experienced? The right honourable gentleman surely did not need to be

reminded of that period when he himself filled a high office in administration, when not in a moment of war, but nine months after preliminaries of peace were signed, four millions of Exchequer bills were issued, which fell to a discount of 21 per cent. But even if the right honourable gentleman was desirous to confine himself to bills issued during the last period, and upon which he had calculated the extravagant interest to arise, he should take in the whole of the month of October. During that month, however, the average state of the discount was 10l. per cent. In order to colour as high as possible the gloomy and melancholy picture which he drew of the state of credit, he had formed his statement upon the highest day of that period as the rate of discount for the whole of the month. But when the terms of a bargain were discussing, the object of which was to remove out of the market that quantity of floating securities which the right honourable gentleman had represented as the very cause of that evil which he described in such strong colours, it was to have been expected that these objections would have been waved. The principle itself was far from being denied, and the measure derived support from the very manner in which it had been condemned. To discover the real advantage which the holders of the bills received, it was necessary to consider the whole of the subject. He had prepared calculations upon this point, from the result of which, the Committee would be able to perceive what in reality had been the general rate of discount upon Navy bills for the period for which they were issued. They were to compare, then, the extremes of the lowest and highest; and the Committee would be surprised to know, after the gloomy accounts they had heard, that the average of the discounts from October, 1795, to the end of October, 1796, was only $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The average of each month was likewise to be viewed along with the quantity issued each month, so that it appeared that the holders of the Bills, so far from receiving at the rate of 103l. per cent. or according to the right honourable gentleman's corrected statement, at the rate of 130l. per cent. received upon the bills issued for that period no more than $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. With regard to the difference which ought to be made between the persons holding bills for a greater or less space, he should not argue that part of the subject. He should afterwards state what difference he had made. He wished, however, on this occasion, to recal the sentiments of the right honourable gentleman during former periods upon this point. When he had first entered into the situation which he now filled, at the end of the American war, amidst the financial disorder which then prevailed, when for a period of five years the average

discount upon Navy Bills had been higher than when the right honourable gentleman himself had previously been in administration, and yet parliament had never been called upon to prevent the necessity of so great a quantity of floating securities, and to afford the supplies which had been raised by the issue of these bills, and he (Mr. Pitt) was called upon to fund that mass of unprovided debt, the idea of discrimination was violently opposed by the right honourable gentleman, and he spoke with equal confidence and certainty of the blow which credit was to receive, as he did on the present occasion. It appeared, however, that the right honourable gentleman had changed his opinion, and that the principles which he professed in 1784, did not equally apply in 1796 as they had done at the former period. The principle of discrimination which he had proposed to introduce, and had explained formerly, was one which policy dictated, if the propriety of funding was at all admitted. The right honourable gentleman had talked of a bonus when the money was borrowed, and a bonus when it was to be paid. The point, however, stood shortly thus: Upon every 100l. which was issued in the way of Navy bills, the holder, at the rate of 4 per cent. was to receive 105l. in fifteen months. To induce the holders to take a different species of security, it was necessary to give something more than the real value: if this slight advantage was not given, then the public incurred no additional expence, and unless the right honourable gentleman maintained (what rather seemed to be the object of his argument to represent in a different light) that at the time when the bills became due, the state of the finances and of credit might be so improved that they might be discharged more advantageously, he could see no objection to the measure. He himself was inclined to think that the public credit and resources would at that future period be in so flourishing a state as to realize this supposition, and were it proper to speculate at all, he should speculate upon such an event. But if it might interfere with the exertions by which we were to be placed in that desirable situation, to allow the market to continue to be depressed, and our resources fettered by such a quantity of floating securities, were we by a criminal neglect to defeat the speculation, and to disappoint our prospects? But the right honourable gentleman said that he should not speculate on such a favourable state of our public situation at such a period, and was inclined to hold out views of a less pleasing nature. If, however, these Navy bills were to be paid at little more than the rate which the holders were entitled to receive at the end of fifteen months, the right honourable gentleman cannot object to the measure, except he can prove that the advantage of paying just now, with the small

additional temptation to the holder, is not equal to the saving which the difference would occasion. The right honourable gentleman will not surely say that 6 per cent. for fourteen months, with a view to induce the holders to fall in with the plan, was an extravagant profit. The right honourable gentleman said that the Navy bills, notwithstanding the regulation by which they were to be paid in fifteen months, had continued to experience a high discount. It surely, however, was not discreditable to have introduced a law under the operation of which they had maintained their credit so well, compared with the state of depreciation they had experienced during the American war, and at other periods. The right honourable gentleman said that Parliament should have been assembled and called for the regular supplies, instead of issuing bills to such an amount. But what had the right honourable gentleman himself done when he was a Member of Administration? If he was then of opinion that Parliament should be summoned, how could he reconcile that opinion with the expedient he had adopted, with the issue of four millions of Navy bills in order to supply the wants of the public service? The present measure was in fact a progressive step towards removing from the market those floating securities which the right honourable gentleman represented as so disadvantageous, and towards the attainment of that object which he considered as necessary. With regard to the terms, it was asked, Whether advantage was to be taken of the alteration of the funds? This, however, was of very little importance. The fall arose from a general cause, though it might be expected that before the new funded debt had properly diffused itself, some alteration in the stock in which it was vested would take place—a circumstance which was foreseen and allowed by the holders, though he had not considered it of much weight. The bonus to the holders was extremely small, and of itself was a striking proof of the high estimation of our resources, and the general credit of the country.—There was another point on which the right honourable gentleman spoke with a degree of candour, in which he seemed to have forgot the former difference of opinion which subsisted between them. Perhaps the animosity the right honourable gentleman had once displayed upon this subject was softened by time, and they now had approached near to the opinions of each other. He did not imagine the right honourable gentleman had purposely abated somewhat of the strictness of a doctrine he had formerly held so keenly, when he had no longer the same motives to press its utmost extent, especially when he might find some advantage in the application of it on the present occasion. They indeed had not, it seems, differed

so widely as they once imagined. This was with regard to the addition of capital, and the quantity of interest. The advantages and the disadvantages of both modes of funding were such, in the right honourable gentleman's opinion, that it was not easy to assign the limits in which they were to be taken. The honourable gentleman in expressing his opinion of the funding in the highest class, had not stated his objections with that vehemence which he had displayed on former occasions. The right honourable gentleman had not recollected that the sinking fund had the effect to render it more eligible to add to the interest rather than to the capital, as it operated at once to the reduction of the mass of the debt, and to improve the general credit of the country. If the right honourable gentleman himself found it difficult to determine how much interest should be given, it should not seem surprising to him that there were some difference in the proportions. The greatest variation was a fraction upon a point which, the right honourable gentleman had confessed, was not reducible to any general principle. He could not therefore expect any great proportion between them, for the interests would vary in different degrees. Having stated so much, he should not go farther into details, but should only desire the Committee to bear in mind the points to which he had adverted, and the errors which he had exposed in the statements of the right honourable gentleman. He had shewn that the calculations of the right honourable gentleman were exaggerated. He had proved that on former occasions, particularly after the conclusion of the last war, the discount upon Navy bills had been 21 per cent. and that only $6\frac{1}{2}$ was the general rate to which they had been depressed. He should therefore leave the Committee to judge whether the measure deserved the reprobation which it had received, and with what consistency it proceeded from the right honourable gentleman.

Mr. FOX said that he had indeed stated the discount upon Navy bills as unfavourable to the credit of the country; but his calculation of the enormous rate of 135l. per cent. which had been paid for money, he had produced as inferring blame upon those by whom it was given. He blamed Ministers because they had borrowed money at such interest. He could not mean to represent the credit of the country to be sunk so low as that better terms could not be obtained, because then those who borrowed could not be blamed; but he reprobated their conduct because they had not prevented the necessity of such terms. He had not confined himself merely to the month of October, for, reckoning to the 8th of November, some part of September must be included.

The proportion of the bills which fell under his calculation, however, was nearly a third. The right honourable gentleman had taken October as his average month; but did the right honourable gentleman seriously imagine that he had proved his point by taking this average? for during eight or ten days the intention of funding was known, and the credit of the Navy bills recovered of course. He had never stated that holders of bills had in view a profit at the rate of 135l. per cent. but he had said that Ministers were culpable in issuing bills when they knew that such a profit would be paid by the public. The right honourable gentleman had alluded to an administration in which he (Mr. Fox) had the honour to be concerned, though he had no particular connection with the financial department. But were Navy bills in the same situation with that species of security now? At that time no interest commenced for six months, and there was no fixed period for their payment. With what propriety then can the right honourable gentleman compare the state of Navy bills then with their situation under the existing regulations? The law by which they were limited to fifteen months had met with his approbation, and he should perhaps give his support to any proposal that tended still farther to limit the period of their circulation. He had said that the measure of limiting them to fifteen months had not been efficacious, but this he conceived was to be ascribed to the magnitude of the evil, to which the remedy was inadequate. But the different situation in which Navy bills now stood took away from the right honourable gentleman all advantage from the comparison he had made. During the American war Navy bills often ran two and sometimes three years. The right honourable gentleman had alluded to the discrimination which he had opposed when the Navy bills were to be funded at the end of the American war. He had objected to any discrimination, because at that time the only security which the holder possessed was that he should be paid previous to any bills being issued of a subsequent date to those he held, and of course their payment might have been deferred till a new war, or some other circumstance, rendered a new issue of Navy bills necessary. Upon this the point had been abandoned. The right honourable gentleman, who displayed the same magnanimity in receding as in advancing, had given up his point, but retained his opinion. He had stated that the opposition had proceeded from the most factious spirit, and, in abandoning his plan, he imputed it entirely to the idle clamour which faction had excited. The holders of bills now, however, possess all the security of the country, and are entitled to be paid at the expiration of fifteen months. This he admitted was an improvement in fi-

nance. The right honourable gentleman had said that he had deprecated the number of Navy bills, yet had refused his assent to the measure by which the number was to be decreased. He confessed that he reprobated this unsystematic mode of proceeding. He did not think it was necessary to get rid of them on bad terms. He did not know when the idea of funding these bills had first occurred, but he did not imagine it was quite new. It was easy to conceive what advantage individuals might have made by knowing that the measure was to take place. He did not imagine, however, that the right honourable gentleman would give opportunity for such a speculation. He did not think so ill of the credit of the country, even under all the pressure of this expensive war, and under the management of its present finance Ministers, nor did he think the payment of interest at the rate of 130 per cent. had any thing to do with this point; yet he saw little subject of consolation in perceiving that Navy bills had laboured under a permanent depression of $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. which with their usual interest amounted to more than 10 per cent. As to our credit it was liable to be affected by persevering in a system of expence out of all proportion to our means. That the issuing of Navy bills to such an extent affected credit he firmly believed, and he should willingly concur in any measure by which the practice might be farther regulated and confined. But these applications were not radical. To limit them to six, or even three months, would not do if the quantity should not be diminished. These remedies were ineffectual because they did not reach the root. They did not produce any apparent influence, because they were not equal to the rapid increase and confirmed inveteracy of the evil. It was said that $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. was no great bonus. He on the other hand thought it too much. It was said you must give something. He did not see any necessity for this at all. Here there was no advance of money. If the bill was worth so much, they could keep it; if they wanted money, they got another exchangeable security at par. He did not think that any premium should have been necessary to induce men to part with an exchangeable security, at a discount, for another at par, and if the holder would not agree, it could only be on speculation that other bills would be issued, from which they would derive some ultimate advantage. On any other views the bargain must be favourable. The right honourable gentleman had said that he (Mr. Fox) had come nearer him in his views upon the point of funding by capital or interest. He had never maintained his opinion in extremes. But it was not necessary to go back to former differences, for the same observations applied either as to

the quantity of interest or the increase of capital, but yet it was well known in arithmetic and mathematics that the relations of quantities might be ascertained; from this he thought the latter might be discovered. Upon this ground he had arraigned the difference of interests in proportion to capital. He had been accused of presenting gloomy highly-coloured views of our situation. It was not, however, the question, whether they were gloomy, but whether they were true, and whether they were not such as ought to call the attention of the Committee to the subject. What he had stated was not with a view to depreciate our credit, but in order to afford facts by which we were to judge of our situation, and to examine the conduct of Ministers. We were in reality come to this, that the remedies that had been employed had little effect, because they were not equal to the evil; regulations were unable to confine us within even the worst precedents of former times.—These must now be given up as hopeless, and something more efficacious attempted. Tho' the right honourable gentleman called his calculations extravagant, he never tried to confute them, and what he had stigmatized as overcharged colouring, he has never ventured to deny. What he had mentioned went to a very alarming extent. The country should not be contented with the answer—that our means were powerful and our resources great. The necessity of effective exertions were held out, but what rational hope could be entertained that our resources would supply the ability? It was admitted that the balance of debt on the Navy bills was five million more than the right honourable gentleman had calculated. This was a sufficient foundation for all objections that had been made. Before the end of the year, if it went on in the same proportion, an additional excess of three millions would be incurred. In December, the right honourable gentleman had stated, that 1,500,000*l.* would probably be the amount. In April and May, he stated four millions, and now it was admitted to be seven millions. The whole survey of the war, and the financial expedients that had been employed, proved, that it had been in vain to attempt by any remedies to stop the evil arising from the increase of the quantity of Navy Bills. All this shewed that palliatives would no longer do, that it was necessary to strike at the root of the evil, and compare our resources with our expenditure, in order to be enabled to support those exertions, which, in the case of a farther prosecution of the war, we might be called upon to make.

Mr. Chancellor PITT and Mr. FOX said each a few words in explanation.

Mr. MILBANK mentioned that he had heard, that Navy bills had been at 16l. per cent. discount, and he wished to be informed how such a circumstance was compatible with the description which had been given of the flourishing state of the country. He considered it as a fair question; he expected that he would receive an explicit answer.

No answer was given.

The Committee then divided upon the resolution;

Ayes, 208; Noes, 48; Majority, 160.

It was also moved and resolved,

“ That towards making good the supply granted to his Majesty
“ there be issued and applied the sum of 420,000l. of the money
“ now remaining in the Exchequer, being the disposeable over-
“ plus of the grants for the year 1796.”

The House being resumed, and the order of the day for taking into farther consideration the report of the Militia Augmentation bill being read, and a motion being made for recommitting the bill,

Mr. CURWEN rose and said—“ Sensible of the importance and advantage of unanimity at this momentous crisis, nothing but the strongest sense of duty should compel me to hazard a step which might intercept it. If Ministers are equally sincere in their wishes to preserve the general concurrence of opinion which has hitherto prevailed, it is incumbent upon them to give such information as may justify this House, and reconcile the nation to the burden and inconvenience which must result from the measures now under consideration. Sir, in my humble opinion, it would have been wise and politic in Ministers to have commenced their proceedings by fully and fairly laying before the House the information on which his Majesty’s gracious communication of the threatened invasion is founded: every war for the last century has had its bug-bear of invasion. The present has been abundantly prolific in idle threats and gasconade, but I have yet to learn that one step towards the execution of them has ever been taken —In what does this manifestation to invade the country differ from former ones that have been announced to us? Is it in a renewal of idle threats, or in actual preparations? If the latter, they are easily explained. To estimate the danger by what is required to guard us against it, I could scarcely rate it too highly; and yet if such really be the case, is it either probable or even possible that Ministers would risk the safety of the nation on a *cold declaration* of opinion, which has raised neither alarm nor energy in the country? Has the right

honourable gentleman's system been so free of deception as to preclude distrust in the breasts of those, who have neither confidence nor opinion of him? If the right honourable gentleman wishes for the concurrence of this side of the house, 'tis not on the score of confidence, but on a fair and candid explanation of his measures he can have it. If the danger be real, there can be but one sentiment; to be freed from such calamity (for an invasion would be a great calamity, however much it might end to our wishes,) no sacrifices are too great: what so likely to rouse the people as fully to instruct them of the extent and magnitude of the danger? whence, then, this backwardness of the Minister to a step, by which every thing is to be gained, and nothing lost? Is there any thing so likely to deter our enemies from so rash an enterprize, as knowing the ardour and energy with which the country is prepared to meet it? Sir, in opposing your leaving the chair, I wish to take issue with the right honourable gentleman, on the reality of the danger; if that should be established, I should feel it my duty to go to any length which might be required. I am sensible, Sir, by opposing what comes under so specious a form as the present measures do, I expose myself to much calumny and misrepresentation. That shall not however deter me from doing my duty. Enemy as I am to the system of confidence, I am aware many occasions may occur to justify this House granting it, upon the responsibility of Ministers. But what is there upon the present occasion which entitles Ministers to ask, or should induce this House to grant it? The providing for our internal security, in which every man has so deep a stake, would, in my humble opinion, be most effectually promoted by the most public avowal of the grounds on which Ministers act. Am I to consider the danger as so imminent that it would be hazardous to intrust the country with the full extent of it?—must we learn it by degrees, to prevent the effects of sudden panic and despondency?—little do they know the character of Englishmen, who would argue thus. Let the danger be as great as it may, the spirit and exertion of the country will rise superior to it. If this does not produce full explanation from Ministers, I shall feel warranted in supposing that invasion is only a pretence to arm them with a power for purposes, the policy of which, might be much questioned both in and out of this House. Sir, I hope we shall govern ourselves by good old maxims, and use that prudent caution and distrust that were the characteristics of former Parliaments, and spurn that blind system of unmeasured confidence which has plunged us into our present calamitous situation—a confidence so

exercised by the last Parliament, as to go to establish in and out of this House, the support of the Minister and his measures, as the criterion of attachment to the Constitution itself. In the midst of our misfortunes we have reason to rejoice that the season of fatal infatuation is nearly at an end; the beneficial consequences are already felt. The right honourable gentleman, sensible he could no longer proceed with his system, has *disgorged* every principle upon which the war has been continued; and there is now no ostensible ground for withholding from us the blessings of peace. Should our hopes be frustrated, I trust to our enemies alone will be imputable the miseries which must ensue. Under such circumstances it will be the duty of every man to the best of his abilities to concur in securing the state, which I look for in the spirit of the country alone, not in the ability or measures of the right honourable gentleman. Sir, in a measure that is to *impose* so heavy a charge upon the country, ought we to have nothing before us to direct our judgement? Is the demand of the Minister to justify us to the public? The extent of preparation should scarcely regulate the measure of defence. An honourable Baronet terms this a half measure; such I cannot consider it, was it even the commencement instead of the fourth year of the most expensive war this country was ever engaged in. Can any man consider a burden of three millions as nothing, and that exclusive of all taxes which may be requisite to carry on the war, should it be forced upon us? Can the taking so large a body of the people from their useful employments be received as a measure of no hardship? I confess myself perfectly unable to discover by what standard the honourable Baronet makes his estimate; not surely by his own ability and readiness to contribute to the burdens; that would be a mode that would suit but few. If he wishes to know the real situation of the country, let him look to the middling and lower classes of the people, for there he can only learn it. Have they made no sacrifices? would to God that was the case!—that our duty may compel us to impose yet farther burdens, but let the necessity proceed to justify us and reconcile the country; let the caution with which we grant, shew we feel and regret what it is out of our power to *prevent*. Sir, having no means of knowing what may be the forwardness or extent of preparations carrying on in France, if any such there be, that occasions the present alarm, I am under the necessity of forming my opinion of the probability of such an event from the relative situation of the two countries, now and at the time when we were supposed to be in a state of such perfect security. I am fully aware the fact may be contrary to all reasoning

upon it—if so, it is more necessary than ever that Ministers should be explicit. Sir, the right honourable Secretary, when he rated our security so highly, attributed much of it to the spirit and loyalty with which the country had come forward and armed itself; I am not to be told the present additional force is rendered necessary from any abatement of that spirit; on the contrary, Sir, I think there is just ground to rate it higher than at any former period. The justice, policy, and necessity of the war was doubted by many—an interest foreign to that of the people was supposed the real grounds of the war; such opinions are not applicable at the present moment; if we are forced to contend, it is for our existence—but one sentiment and feeling can animate the nation. I beg the House to revert to the situation of the country, when we were stated as so completely secure from all danger of invasion; the two Houses of Parliament had come to a resolution that a traitorous plot and conspiracy existed in the country—the alarm was general—Could any season have been so flattering to our enemies, if they even seriously entertained an idea of invading us, or been so formidable to ourselves, when the existence of England and its Constitution was represented as not the cause of every Englishman? Ignorant of the conspirators, men rated them by their fears and prejudices; To keep alive this alarm, no little pains were taken; a few months however afforded the country much satisfaction and comfort, and added greatly to its security also, in my opinion; repeated and solemn trials negatived the plot, and absolved the country from the foul imputation: by this event our enemies were fully undeceived if they ever hoped to find support amongst ourselves. The contemptible light indeed in which Ministers were placed was not likely to inspire great respect or fear of them in our enemies. They could, however, entertain no doubt that every arm would be raised to oppose them; if such a season was not profited of by our enemies, not dreaded by our rulers, what have we now to fear? The American war produced strong opposition in this House—still more powerful on the part of the people—What does this moment present, a phenomenon in politics never before seen—a Minister still guides the helm, who has proved himself unable to direct the power of the country with vigour or effect, whose measures have heaped upon us disasters and disgrace; a Minister who has imposed burdens beyond all former Ministers—whose innovations upon the Constitution threaten its existence—who has nailed up the mouths of a best majority of the nation, and established triumphantly the *system of barracks*, in every part of the kingdom, and yet, Sir, his Majesty confides—the nation is *passive*—and those in

this House who have neither confidence nor opinion of him do not wish to embarrass his measures. Sir, do our well-grounded hopes of security rest here? No. Have the glorious achievements of our Navy contributed nothing to our safety? Is the bravery, the unparralleled skill and exertions of our gallant seamen, an empty and barren theme of praise, and calculated only to flatter our national feeling? Was our navy ever so numerous at any former period? No—His Majesty tells us, with a pride on which every Englishman shares, that, with few exceptions, we have been able to confine our enemies to their ports; what has happened to occasion this sad reverse that we must now tremble for our safety? I profess, Sir, this is a mystery I cannot comprehend. What was the situation of France when our boasted security was so great? France was in possession of Holland and the Netherlands; the Emperor's armies were driven into the heart of Germany; our brave troops were expelled out of Holland, and after surmounting many dangers and difficulties, found an *hospitable asylum* in Hanover. Spain and Sardinia had every thing to fear—our subsidizing friend Prussia, had become the ally of France—the Elector of Hanover had made his peace also with the Republic—the internal commotions of France had in a great measure subsided. In such a situation of power on the part of France, England represented as distracted and divided with factions, could any thing offer so fair a prospect of success; and yet our enemies, awed by the unsurmountable difficulties of the project, contented themselves with threatening us. To the hardships of scarcity has succeeded the blessings of plenty; under all our sufferings we enjoy many comforts; the great preparations of the present campaign on the Continent have ended without procuring to France any additional advantages; on the contrary, she appears less able to hazard an attack against us now, than at the conclusion of the last campaign. Our own situation seems to have every thing to deter and discourage our enemies from such an attempt. With such a view of the subject, I can see nothing to justify my belief of the danger, and I cannot but consider this measure as applicable to other purposes. Is it, Sir, to enable Ministers to proceed with their system of conquests in the West Indies? If it be, I have no hesitation in saying, I would not grant a man for that service. If our navy be not yet on a footing to destroy and annihilate the trade of our enemies, render it so; great as our expences have been for that purpose, no one will regret or wish to narrow these exertions. Sir, if we are compelled to continue the war—union and exertion is the duty of all; I would relinquish for the present, endeavours to *restore*, secure, and

preserve the Constitution we are born to—and bend all our force to obtain a secure and lasting peace, the blessing of which would be, in my opinion, ineffectual to restore the country to happiness and prosperity, if unattended with great and radical reforms. Sir, if it be made out to me, that, contrary to all rational supposition, the danger is real, I shall not object to the propositions of the right honourable gentleman, because they seem a copy of what he has bestowed so much eloquence to reprobate; I shall not object to them as vesting in the Crown such great additional powers, nor shall I fear putting arms into the hands of the people. If the danger be real, I am as disposed as any gentleman in the House to grant every thing that can be fairly required; but till convinced of that, I shall think myself justified in giving my opposition to the whole plan before us.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that it was far from his intentions to detain the House from manifesting that disposition which they would certainly feel upon the present occasion, to act up to that solemn pledge which they had given on a former night, to neglect no measure to prevent or to repel the danger to which the country was exposed from the threatened invasion. He thought that every man in the house, and even the honourable gentleman who spoke last, when they gave this assurance in an address presented to the Throne by the unanimous vote of the House, did not consider it as mere words of form, but that there could have been nothing more pointed, more definitive, and more sincere than the idea which this assurance conveyed. What had occurred since this pledge was given he was at a loss to know. He believed it was the first time in the history of the country, when danger from an external foe was announced in the speech from the Throne, that the subject had been made the matter of parliamentary detail. On the former evening the House seemed to be sensible of the impossibility of His Majesty's Ministers communicating to the public the proofs of the existence of the danger of which they might be in possession. Every person seemed to be satisfied with the assurance which was then given, that Government was in possession of documents to warrant His Majesty in making such a communication in his gracious speech; and after the communication had been made from such a quarter, he did not expect its authority would have been questioned, nor was it conveyed in the language of coldness or indifference. They had been told by those in a responsible situation that Ministers knew enough, from intelligence to which they gave credit, to render it necessary for them to apprize the country of its danger, and to call upon it to exert its means of defence.

A right honourable friend of his (Mr. Secretary Dundas), who was absent from illness on this evening, had stated his conviction, that from the statement which he had heard of the actual preparations which were making in France, apparently for the purpose of invading this country, that there was just ground of alarm, and that the necessity of adopting measures for our internal defence was extremely pressing. Was this the language of coldness or indifference, much less of hesitation and doubt? If any thing had been wanting to convince him of the reality of the danger, every thing which had occurred from that day to this, strengthened his apprehensions. At present he neither felt it safe nor practicable to enter into any detail of the sources of his information; and after what he had advanced he would not insult the feelings of the House so far as to enter into any argument upon the subject. But after what he knew respecting the preparations which were making for putting the design into execution, he would have considered himself as guilty of the highest crime against his Sovereign and the country, had he neglected to call upon Parliament to exercise its wisdom in devising those measures which might tend to avert the threatened attempt, or to turn it to the ruin and confusion of the enemy.

In the sincere conviction of his heart, he felt it as a sacred and important duty to call on the country to neglect no exertion by which it could add to its security. He had, from the first public avowal of it, thought the danger real and great, and such as required every precaution in our power; and in consequence of every accessible information he had since been able to obtain, his original apprehensions of the danger of an invasion were not only confirmed, but increased; and he could not, therefore, too earnestly call on the country to provide by every means in its power, for the most speedy counteraction and effectual defence.

But however satisfactory this declaration might be to the House at large, there were some gentlemen to whom he knew it would be ineffectual. Those seemed to have the disposition to consider every danger, however serious to the country, as nothing more than a false alarm raised by Government.—The honourable gentleman who had just sat down, partook of this disposition, and endeavoured, by detailing a number of instances, to impress his opinion on the House, and persuade them that the present was (like other former cases) a mere false alarm. From those instances which the honourable gentleman had given, he for his own part did not feel much: they could not alter the expressed sense of the House, or falsify the fact which nine tenths of the people acknowledged, and which was recognized by the recent declarations

of Parliament. It was somewhat singular, and indeed inexplicable, that the honourable gentleman should promise to believe the existence of danger if evidence was laid before the House, and yet refuse to believe it on the evidence which had formerly been given, and which was satisfactory to the House at large, and seemed to be so then to the honourable gentleman. Whatever the honourable gentleman might take upon him to say of the mind of the people, he would not agree to take him as a sample of the public opinion, though the honourable gentleman founded his complaint on the admission that the country was attached to the Government. The House would judge of the honourable gentleman's motives; he had called for a detailed proof of a matter announced from the Throne—and which never was announced from the Throne without sufficient grounds—and had desired the House to shew a distrust of the assertions in the speech from the Throne, at the most imminent risk and hazard to themselves, a distrust which had never yet been shewn by our ancestors. He concluded with saying, that his belief of the spirit and public zeal of the House made him feel, that he should but insult them if he took up more of their time, or detained them any farther from shewing the genuine loyalty, zeal, and attachment to the Constitution which they had already evinced, in their unanimous address to His Majesty.

Mr. FOX. “ I rise to make some observations upon the doctrines that have fallen from the right honourable gentleman who has just sat down; doctrines, which if they be true, we had better do that in words, which the present Administration have been constantly doing in actions; we had better declare that the Constitution of the country is only good for praise and for oratorical flourish, but that it is not proper for a state of warfare; we had better say that when Ministers have brought the country into peril, that peril is a sufficient ground for confidence in them, and that when they have involved us in difficulty and danger, it is the business of the people to surrender all their vigilance, to repose complete faith in them, or in other words, to suspend the Constitution, and to make the Government of the country an armed Monarchy. We are told that it is enough for the King to tell us that a danger exists, and for us to declare that if it exists, we will put the country in a situation to resist it; we are told, I say, that it is enough for us to pledge ourselves at once to such bills as these; bills which impose upon the people greater pecuniary burdens than any that were ever imposed for any purpose of Government; this however we are informed we must do, or forfeit our pledge to the King. Sir, the Speech of the King, I shall always consider, and

it is usual so to consider it, as the Speech of the Ministers. They tell us there is a danger of an invasion ; I may be willing for a time to suspend any inquiry into the causes that have involved us in this difficulty and disgrace. I may be willing to suspend for a time an inquiry into the conduct of those who have brought us into the danger ; but must I not know what it is ? Must the mere bringing us into danger be of itself a sufficient claim to confidence ? For one, I am of opinion that from external causes there is no particular apprehension of an invasion ; but still more am I of opinion, that if, under the pretence of strengthening the country, Ministers are only doing as they have formerly done, strengthening themselves and their principles ; if they are expressing their apprehensions of danger only to produce this effect, why then I should hesitate whether I would apply any remedy at all—but even should the danger really exist, I should hesitate much before I applied such a remedy as this. We are not, Sir, so young in the House as to imagine that, because we approve of the Speech from the Throne, we pledge ourselves to all the measures which the Minister may think proper to adopt, or that the vote we came to, upon the first day of this session, bound us to pass such bills as these. With respect to the bills, I see some parts of them more objectionable in their principle and provisions than others. Sir, the calling upon so many men in the country—the putting them under martial law, and under officers of the Crown, without those safeguards which are contained in the old militia acts, and at a time when the erection of barracks all over the country evinces the system of separating the soldiery from the people, and according to the ingenious reasoning of some gentlemen, making the soldiers deaf if the people cannot be made dumb ; Sir, the doing these things is a grievous hardship and oppression. It is no light thing to make the people imbibe military notions and military prejudices under officers of the Crown, without any of those checks and guards, which, I repeat it, are contained in the former regulations relative to the militia. It has lately been too much the fashion to forget old prejudices and old principles : Sir, I have no difficulty, much as the term has been ridiculed, in confessing myself an alarmist—I am alarmed at the situation of the country—I believe that there is a faction in it, whose wish and endeavour are to increase the power of the Crown, at the expence of the liberties of the people.—I believed it in common, once, with those who are now converts from that belief ; who think now that Ministers, whose measures they formerly so reprobated, are so satiated with power, so glutted with patronage and emoluments, as to have lost all those marks and

features that rendered them the objects of their former dread and detestation. I am not one of these; I am not one who think that the lesser evil is—and, good God! what is this lesser evil?—the fear of the liberties and rights of the people being lost in the power of the Crown! with these feelings about me, can I be brought to think that raising such a force, as that proposed by the bill, is not a most alarming circumstance, to which nothing short of the necessity of risking every thing, could possibly reconcile me? And now a word or two on the bills themselves; and first, with respect to the present bill, by which men are to be raised in the different parishes. Without entering into the policy of the bill, I must contend that the general burden will be very considerable. Do I mean to contend by this that burdens ought not to be imposed in times of difficulty and peril? By no means; but if we are now to provide against an existing danger, we are not to provide against a general danger, but against a specific danger of an invasion of Great Britain by the enemy. Such is my opinion. Why then, I say, it does give me no good idea of the present Ministers, when I see them always bring forward false pretences. When I see them, under these bills, providing that the different parishes shall raise men, not for the specific purpose of resisting an invasion, but for general military purposes; when I see this, I must think that the real motive of the measure is not for domestic service, but for the purpose of carrying on offensive war abroad; and in this opinion, I am a good deal influenced by what fell from a right honourable gentlemen high in office. I do not like to quote the words of any person in his absence, but, Sir, words that drop from Ministers are not in the nature of expressions from common men; they come with authority and in an official shape. I cannot forget that right honourable gentleman's speech on a former night, when he said that the present plan was highly eligible, inasmuch as it would enable His Majesty's Ministers to prosecute the war abroad. If this be the fact, I would advise gentlemen not to be so active in their approbation of the measure. Do not be so impatient, as the right honourable gentleman has recommended to you, in your testimonies of support. You will have opportunities enough of voting hundreds, thousands, and millions, I have no doubt, for carrying on offensive war abroad. This, therefore, is what I complain of; and I cannot help thinking the present alarm with respect to invasion, to be one of those pretences which Ministers do not believe, but which they bring forward in order to get strength for purposes which they do not chuse to state. The bill for the raising a force of cavalry is objectionable in all its shapes. If an invasion were

certain, I should object to it as impracticable and tyrannical, and as tending to lay such enormous taxes upon the people, as are almost intolerable. And at what period are we called upon for such taxes?—Before the Minister has opened what is usually called his budget.

When I consider the conversation that has passed to-day, and the excess that has occurred in our expenditure, have I not ample reason to suppose that we shall in the ensuing budget be called upon to bear burdens equally heavy, at least with any that have been laid upon us in the former years of the war? When to those burdens, the burden that will be imposed upon the country by this bill for the raising an additional force of cavalry is added, I feel that I cannot consent to it without trying if any other measure can be adopted less oppressive in its operation, and equally effectual in its consequences. The right honourable gentleman, in recurring to what fell from my honourable friend (Mr. Curwen,) has alluded to what he stated respecting his disbelief of the present alarm, because all former alarms propagated by Ministers have been proved to be false. The right honourable gentleman contends, that that disbelief is against evidence, and contrary to the opinion of nine-tenths of the people. Sir, I remember when an inquiry into the existence or non-existence of any cause for alarm was demanded, that demand was refused. Should that inquiry ever be entered into, I will maintain, that not only will it be found, no reason existed for any alarm, but that Ministers, when they called out the militia, and summoned the Parliament in 1792, disbelieved the alarm themselves. Sir, that measure of calling out the militia, and summoning the Parliament, will be a measure to be deplored to the latest posterity. It occasioned more rivers of blood to be shed, and more treasure to be expended, than ever were shed or expended during the reign of that despot Louis XIV. On the subject of alarms, a great deal of ingenuity, and I think misapplied ingenuity, has been exerted on different occasions. Some gentlemen were alarmed about the operation of French principles, and the consequences that would result in this country from the French victories. That being mere matter of reasoning, I have candour enough to believe, that though the danger appeared to me to be very trifling, if any existed at all, yet that persons who entertained those apprehensions were sincere; but that is not the alarm we are speaking of. I am speaking of the calling regiments to the capital, and the fortifying of the Tower, as if an immediate insurrection were apprehended. Since that period, many innocent men have been arraigned by His Majesty's Government for High

Treason. However certain persons may be inclined to blame the want of diligence in the lawyers, I think no complaint will be urged against them for not bringing a quantum of evidence, and that too of dates considerably remote. Yet though these lawyers had access to all the sources of Government—though they ransacked and rummaged all the records possessed by Administration, yet they never produced a single proof (I do not say to satisfy themselves) yet they never produced a single proof to satisfy the jury, that when the Tower was fortified, any of those desperate traitors entertained such projects of insurrection as those that have been alluded to. I did not think that I should have been under the necessity of entering into these particulars this day; but when the right honourable gentleman says that our belief is contrary to the belief of nine-tenths of the people, it becomes incumbent upon me to maintain, that no solid ground of alarm existed at the time when these extraordinary precautions were taken. I wish gentlemen to refer to the trials for high treason—I wish gentlemen to read them, and tell me if they find the slightest trace of that insurrection, affected to be so much dreaded in December 1792. Upon these trials some have expressed an opinion that they are the disgrace of the country; others have said that they contribute to its honour. Strange as it may seem, I agree in both those opinions—I think that they were disgraceful——

Mr. YORKE here said, that he was obliged to call the right honourable gentleman to order, as he conceived he had wandered from the question, and if that latitude of discussion were indulged, the present question would not be decided that night.

The SPEAKER said, that he conceived Mr. Fox to be perfectly in order. He opposed the re-commitment of the present bill, upon the ground that the alarm of an invasion had been raised upon false pretences; a proposition which he illustrated by recurring to the history of former alarms. He admitted, however, that he was rather too particular upon some of these points; but he did not consider himself as called upon to interrupt him.

Mr. FOX in continuation——I am not quite satisfied with the mode in which I was called to order. We have not yet imbibed such a detestation of equality, as not to have some regard for impartiality, and we have not yet established the custom of deciding by a hammer or a bell at what particular hour the debate shall be closed, however it may sometimes be finished by a clamour for the question. I should not have alluded to the trials, had not an allusion been rendered necessary by what fell from the right honourable gentleman opposite to me. Our belief of the alarms is said to be

contrary to the opinion of nine-tenths of the people—I do not think so; but if it were contrary to the belief not only of nine-tenths, but of nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand, I should still be equally inclined to declare my opinion; but I should augur very ill indeed of the people, if I thought that they could resist such evidence as was adduced upon the trials. Perhaps I flatter myself that I am not in such a minority as the right honourable gentleman supposes. What I am in this House, I know not. What I am in the country, I am equally ignorant of; but I do know, that if I speak of that part of the country which I am best acquainted with, I have the good fortune to agree in opinion with a decided majority. When I was called to order, I was observing, that there was no ground for the original alarm in the year 1792. I was going to remark upon those trials, that the prosecution of innocent men was disgraceful to the country, and their acquittal honourable. How comes it that so many were acquitted? because so many were prosecuted who ought not to have been prosecuted. Sorry I am, that I shall frequently have occasion to offend the honourable gentleman who called me to order, if recurring to past actions, in order to form my opinion of the future, be against the established rules of the House. The country, I allow, is in a situation of great difficulty, in a situation of danger, cruel danger, but not so much from any apprehension of an invasion on the part of the enemy; it is in a state of peril from which there is no way to extricate it, but by a retrospective view of the measures of Ministers, and a judicial examination of their conduct. I have stated that the bills are doubtful measures, even supposing extraordinary measures to be necessary. In 1794, after the great arming of the country, we were told that the force then embodied was sufficient to resist any invasion that might be attempted. What is the situation of the country now? an honourable friend of mine states that it is in a state of great internal quiet. In this opinion, as in most others, I perfectly agree with him, if he means that there is in the country a general love for the Constitution; I have no doubt of it; the people are universally well affected to the Constitution, I believe; but that they are more attached to the Constitution as it is now, than as it was at the commencement of the war, I cannot allow. I cannot believe that I am one of those 80,000 incorrigible jacobins, whom nothing can reconcile to the monarchy of this country; so far from thinking their number to be so formidable, I believe that it will be difficult to find one of that description. But if those be incorrigible jacobins who detest the measures of His Majesty's Ministers, who are of opinion that their conduct has tar-

nished the glory of the country, and that they have conducted pusillanimously a contest which they rashly and unjustly commenced—who think that not only an inquiry into their conduct is indispensable, but that a reform is absolutely necessary, in order to prevent the country from being cursed with such Ministers as the present, if any such can ever curse the country—if these are the incorrigible jacobins, I am glad to hear that they amount to 80,000. I wish they amounted to eight millions. The right honourable gentleman, who states that there is so much necessity for going into the committee, does not disdain, however, to give us some information. He says, that his apprehensions of the danger of an invasion are increased lately; and he said this in so emphatic a way, that I, for one, do not wish to press an opposition to the measure. If the Minister really thinks that there is any danger of an invasion, I will not object to some increase of the militia force; but even in that case, I will only suspend my inquiry into the causes that have brought us into this danger. The right honourable gentleman, however, must be aware, that if an invasion is likely to be attempted in England, one system of measures will be necessary, which will not apply, if the invasion is likely to be attempted in another part. Let the Minister state this, in order that the means may be adapted to the exigence. Suppose, for example, that Jamaica was in danger of being invaded, you would hardly think it necessary to adopt any precaution in Great Britain; the same observation will apply to parts nearer home. If any other part of the British territories is in danger, the measures calculated to repel that danger ought to be applied to that part, which is conceived to be particularly menaced. In observing upon the speech of my honourable friend, the right honourable gentleman said, with a kind of triumphant air, that he admitted the general support of the people to the Government. I heard distinctly what my honourable friend said, and I conceived him to express his opinion, not that there was a general support of the measures of His Majesty's Ministers throughout the country, but a general indifference; whether this is the same thing, I leave to the right honourable gentleman to decide. He must know that his only chance of support is from the indifference and lethargy of the country, and from their natural consequence and ignorance.

Such kind of support, however, as this, can hardly, I should think, be as cordial and satisfactory to his feelings, as that which is the result of judgement and the effect of deliberation. When I consider the basis upon which the Constitution stands, I confess that I consider this indifference as an alarming symptom. I hope it

does not exist to any great extent ; for sure I am, that the best security against an invasion will consist, not in the indifference of the country, but in its zeal, its firmness, and its unanimity. I understand the right honourable gentleman to say that there is a real danger ; a miserable assertion this, by the way, for the House to proceed upon without more substantial evidence ; but, however, the danger we are told is real. That such is the case, is matter of serious concern. Of the ultimate issue of any attempt at an invasion, I am as sanguine as His Majesty's Speech expresses ; but I shall be more sanguine, in proportion as I see the people less indifferent to the Constitution, as the Minister found it not as he has made it. With respect to the bill in question, in consequence of the declaration of the right honourable gentleman, I shall not object to the recommitment of it ; but unless it be materially altered in the Committee, I cannot consent to the passing of it, because I do not think that it contains remedies adequate to the evil. The measure, as far as I have been able to learn, creates much alarm. I think it liable to objections, and I feel that I should not do my duty if I did not state those objections. The other bills appear to be defective in principle, and I cannot see any amendments that can reconcile me to them. One word more. The right honourable gentleman says, that a great danger threatens us. I agree with him in calling upon the people to resist an invasion on the part of France. Resist it, I say, with all your might. Be unanimous in your exertions : be vigorous in your efforts : draw your purses freely : contribute your personal labours cheerfully. But when I call upon the people to repel any attempt that may be made by France, I also call upon them not to be so alarmed at the danger as not to adopt such measures afterwards as may make the struggle beneficial to themselves. Let them not struggle against France, only to yield to the artifices of the present Ministers. My advice to them is, " Be vigilant against the French, be vigilant also against the Minister of this country, who has brought you into this situation of danger. Beware, that while you take measures to prevent your becoming a prey to the French, you do not become a prey to the Minister ! I say be vigilant against domestic as well as your foreign enemies ; but learn to distinguish who your domestic enemies are ; you have been in prosperity, you now feel adversity. Judge not by the assertions of those who have robbed you of your rights ! Judge not by their comments ! Judge not upon presumptive evidence ; but judge by your own good sense ! reflect upon your condition ! consider how you were brought into it ! the situation of your finance must shew you that it is paradoxical indeed, if you could have been brought into it without considerable errors (to

use the softest word) on the part of Ministers, for I wish to speak tenderly even of them in the present conjuncture. I hope you will judge, not from the assertion of those who brought you into the calamities you now feel; but that you will attend a little to the sentiments of those who opposed them in their mad career. I hope you have not quite forgotten the calamities which the American war brought upon you, and which you would not have suffered to any thing like the extent you did, had you not given to Ministers confidence which they did not deserve. But it seems we who oppose Ministers are not a tenth of the nation—be it so; then Ministers cannot complain that we have been any material impediment to them. This is their artifice, and I think I understand it pretty clearly; it has been always the trick of Governments whose proceedings are unjust and foolish, to say, our measures were wise, but they were thwarted in much of their efficacy by opposition. I hope the public will not be the dupes of that artifice any longer. I hope they will discriminate between their domestic enemies and their domestic friends, and that they will not suffer their affairs to remain in that paradoxical state which was sometime ago stated, that Ministers by their misconduct may have brought the country into such a state of danger, as to require that the people should continue to give them confidence, in order to prevent public ruin. Look at the situation of the country. We state the danger, while others give their confidence to Ministers, whose conduct brings it on, and whose plans are the most insane that ever entered into the mind of man. Some may think that by a strange reverse of reason, that the same causes which conducted us to the brink of ruin, may ultimately lead us to safety—That folly and wickedness will in time have the same effect as wisdom and virtue; as it has been said that some animals can counteract their venom, by the repetition of their own stinging. We must look for some such fabulous remedy in our misfortunes, if we give Ministers more confidence; for it is too much to expect any relief from maxims of truth, if such is to be our system.”

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he did not rise again with any intention to discuss the trite topics on which the right honourable gentleman had thought proper to dwell so long. Abundant occasions, and those more seasonable than the present, would doubtless occur for touching on those points which gentlemen on the other side were so frequently anxious to introduce. There were two points only to which he wished to advert: the first was, the interpretation given by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox), of what had fallen from an honourable friend of his (Mr. Curwen).

The latter gentleman was supposed by him to say, that the only support and countenance which Ministers received from the country, arose from the state of indifference and supineness into which the people seemed to be lulled. He had certainly conceived his meaning to be very different; but whatever misunderstanding might have arisen upon this, he would leave to the gentleman himself to rectify. The second point to which he could not avoid referring, was of much greater importance, as connected with the reality of the danger which these kingdoms had to apprehend from an invasion by the enemy. Upon this subject, he was anxious to be fully understood, not speaking of what must be the final issue of such an enterprise, which he, however, hoped, could not remain long undecided; but whether there was good reason to apprehend that such an attempt was actually meditated. He, therefore, again repeated distinctly and seriously, that the assurances already given of those designs being entertained, had since been confirmed by subsequent information. It could not be expected from him to make any explicit avowal of the quarter from which that information came—it was sufficient for him to state, that the danger was real and serious. But unless the information could be supposed to come from the parties themselves, who meditated these enterprises and devised the plans, it would be in vain to inquire, whether the attack was intended against this island in particular, or against a more remote part of His Majesty's dominions: what points might be selected for diversions, and what for the scenes of more important operations, were not properly at this time the objects of public inquiry. We must be prepared at all quarters, and ready to meet and repel the danger wherever it presented itself. The danger he knew to be serious and alarming enough, to make us look on every side for security. But it was not in foreign and very distant parts of our possessions that we were perhaps so much to dread the attack, as nearer home; for he would take it on him to say, and he had very good reasons for the assertion, that the enemy's views were fixed on parts of His Majesty's European dominions little inferior in importance to the island we inhabit.

Mr. CURWEN assured the right honourable gentleman, that he was wholly mistaken in his view of what he had advanced. He by no means asserted that the people of this country gave any general support or confidence to the Minister, but were fatally lulled into the same supineness and indifference to public measures, the fatal consequences of which were felt severely during the American war. He had lamented the supineness of the people, but he did not quote their indifference as a proof of their security. Though the infor-

mation he had obtained, respecting the reality of the danger, was not sufficient to convince him of its existence, or justify the extraordinary measures now proposed, he would nevertheless not persevere in his opposition, after the declaration which had been made by the right honourable gentleman. But at the same time, he considered that he had a right to receive some information of a general nature as to the extent of the enemy's hostile preparations, as a guide to his vote on this important occasion. He should not feel as if he had done his duty if he did not make those inquiries which he had suggested. He perused the King's speech with respect; but he did not conceive that any intimation which it might contain ought to weaken that constant attention which they owed to the interests of their constituents, or annihilate the inquisitorial functions of the House.

Sir JAMES PULTENEY said, that as it seemed to be agreed on by all sides, that in case of an invasion, every possible exertion should be made to raise land forces to protect us from the calamities that must attend such a descent, he could not but think the general apprehension entertained of such being the intention of the enemy, a sufficient reason for our taking every measure to defeat it. However remote the danger may appear at this moment, it might not be the less real. He professed himself to be acquainted with the general opinions of persons of some consideration in France, and through their means, as far as could be expected, with the dispositions and the views of those who held the reins of power. It was true that a formidable invasion could not take place without much previous preparations; but it was equally true, that effectually to defeat such designs, preparation on our part was necessary to furnish the means of opposing them. Some time must be consumed in raising a sufficient body of men, and a farther time was required to make them acquainted with discipline, and to furnish them with arms. He thought that we could have no doubt with respect to the danger, if we but attended to the habitual disposition of the enemy, and particularly of those who were now at the head of the French Government. But we are told they have no army now in readiness to enable them to hazard such an attempt—as if they could not raise an army to realize their intention as soon, and sooner than we can, to defeat it. Is it not probable that they can bring well-disciplined armies to attack us? Should not we therefore prepare a well-disciplined army to resist them? But this could not be the work of a day. We should also consider the extent of coast now possessed by the enemy, and the number of ships they have every where seized, or bought up, to facilitate, nay, to insure their means of invasion.

That consideration would convince us, that we require a longer time to prepare for resistance, than they for an attack. Can prudence, therefore, permit us to lose a moment? On the other hand, was the power of France ever more formidable? When was any regular Government capable of such exertions as they lately have made? No! not even that of Louis XIV. When to this, we add the consideration, that the internal commotions in La Vendee, and other parts, are now wholly suppressed, may we not easily suppose, that in a short time, they would be able to raise in that quarter a very formidable force? When all these views of the business rushed on his mind, he confessed, that he was inclined to agree with an honourable Baronet, who said, that the measure proposed was an insufficient one, and that it should have proposed nearly a double force, effectually to secure the country from so great and alarming a danger.

Mr. FOX was desirous to know, at what time the report was likely to be made, as that was the opportunity which he wished to take for its discussion?

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that under the impression he had of the danger, he thought it his duty to press the progress of the bill with all the rapidity of which such a measure was susceptible, even though it should be incorrect in some of its provisions. He must, therefore, feel averse to any very minute discussions of any particular points for the present, leaving powers for alteration of any of the provisions, by means of a short bill any time in the course of the session. If, therefore, no particular difficulty occurred, he should recommend to have the report agreed to, and the bill to be read a third time to-morrow, or, at farthest, on the day following. In respect to the game-keepers, he observed, that the opposition which that provision met with in the minds of some gentlemen arose from a misapprehension, that all those persons who received deputations should be called out and kept at constant exercise. The contrary, however, was the fact, for the express design of calling upon them was, that they might be employed with advantage in harassing an enemy, and that they were capable of forming a corps whose acquaintance with arms already rendered training in a great measure unnecessary. Upon the whole they would require less restraint than any others, nor should they be called on till the danger appeared so imminent and pressing, that no Englishman would hesitate a moment to come forward to resist it.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that nothing which the right honourable gentleman had now said could remove his objections to that

clause, and he gave notice that he would give it every opposition in his power.

The motion for the Speaker's leaving the chair was then put and carried, when the House went into a Committee on the bill, Mr. Hobart in the chair.

Mr. Chancellor PITT suggested, that as some wealthy individuals or bodies might be induced to exert themselves and raise volunteers nearly equal to the numbers proposed to be raised by this bill, he should, with a view to stimulate such exertions, propose an additional clause, which was accordingly moved and adopted, to this effect, "That in any case where measures might be taken, within any county to raise any number of volunteers, such number should be deducted from that proposed to be raised by this act, within such county; and if two thirds of the said number should be thus raised before the day of ballot, that His Majesty in Council should have a power to adjourn the ballot for such time as to His Majesty should appear proper, to give farther opportunity to complete the quota, as volunteers."

He then moved another clause, which was also adopted, giving power to alter or repeal this act, if judged adviseable, during the present session of Parliament. This, he observed, would give an opportunity to gentlemen to move any alterations they thought proper, at a future period, if the act should appear to contain, from the rapidity with which it had passed through that House, any grievance which ought to be redressed.

The bill, with amendments, and the additional clauses, passed through the Committee; and the House being resumed, Mr. Hobart reported the bill with amendments, when it was moved, and ordered, that the report be received to-morrow.

The House adjourned.

Tuesday, 1st November.

The following were the gentlemen chosen by ballot, to try the merits of the Petition presented by Mr. Tierney, complaining of an undue return for the Borough of Southwark,

T. Grenville, Esq. Chairman.

G. Pocock, Esq.
C. Atkinson, Esq.
E. G. Sutherland, Esq.
E. W. Bootle, Esq.
Honourable T. Bridgeman.
T. D. Tyrwhytt, Esq.

M. G. Lewis, Esq.
Lord Belgrave.
Sir John Frederick.
Sir Edward Knatchbull.
John Wild, Esq.
T. C. Pelham, Esq.

Samuel Whitbread, and } Esqrs. Nominees.
• William Dundas

The following gentlemen were appointed a Committee to try the merits of the Petition complaining of an undue return for the Borough of Malmesbury :

Sir James Stuart Denham, Chairman.

Sir. C. W. Rous Boughton
William Gore Layton, Esq.
William Manning, Esq.
William Moreland, Esq.
The Hon. E. Pierrepont.
Andrew Foley, Esq.

Mark Pringle, Esq.
Joseph Holden Strutt, Esq.
Edward Burrows, Esq.
Evan Nepean, Esq.
William Wilberforce Bird, Esq.
Miles Peter Andrews, Esq.

Thomas Manners Sutton, Esq. } Nominees.
J. Fordyce, Esq. }

The call of the House was extended to Thursday.

The report of the Committee of Ways and Means being brought up,

Mr. FOX restated his arguments against the proportions of the interest to the capital in the terms on which the navy bills were to be funded in the different classes ; to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied ; and the report was then agreed to, with the amendment.

The report of the Committee on the bill for augmenting the Militia was brought up.

On the clause proposing that the operation of the bill should continue during the present war, and for three calendar months after its conclusion,

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that he saw no reason why the bill should be continued not only during the whole of the war, but three months after its conclusion. It was probable that the war might still be protracted long after any alarm of invasion had ceased. This bill was only intended to secure the country from the dangers of invasion. He should therefore propose that the bill should only continue in force two months after the meeting of next session of Parliament.

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied, that when once the men had been trained for twenty days, the hardship with respect to them ceased. It could be no inconvenience to retain them on the footing proposed by the bills. To keep them, when once balloted, in readiness to be called out in case of emergency during the continuance of the war, might, however, be a source of additional strength and confidence to the country. If, contrary to the supposition of the honourable gentleman, a case of actual danger should arise after the period at which he proposed to disband them, some measure must be taken, either to continue their services for a longer time, or have

recourse to a new enrolment, and on either supposition there might be some degree of difficulty and delay.

Mr. FOX said, that at least he saw no reason why their services should be continued for so long a period as three months after the conclusion of the war; all apprehensions of danger, and, consequently, the necessity for keeping them on foot, might surely be obviated within a shorter time.

Mr. Chancellor PITT agreed that the space of three months was not absolutely necessary, and that a period of one month might be sufficient for every purpose of security. The amendment of one month was accordingly adopted.

On the clause allowing men with a certain number of children to act as substitutes,

Mr. Chancellor PITT said that this clause was framed on the same principle as the clause inserted in the bill, taking away from men who had children their former privilege to be exempted from the ballot to serve as militia men. The emergency of the case, and the extent of the service, seemed in both instances to require that no exemption should be made.

Mr. SHERIDAN remarked that in consequence of this clause, a man might be tempted to forsake the habits of sober honesty, to accept the bounty to serve as a substitute, and abandon his children to the care of the parish.

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied that such a case could scarcely occur under the operation of the present bill. First, the man was only to be absent from his family for twenty days, during the period he was to be trained, and it could hardly be supposed that within so short a time his habits should be completely depraved, and his natural affections extinguished. Secondly, the pay he would receive during those twenty days was nearly adequate to the rate of labour, and the additional bounty would enable him to make an adequate provision for the family during his absence.

Mr. SHERIDAN asked; what was the operation of the bill? Were not the men liable to be called out and embodied in a state of imminent danger; and so long as the war continued, what security had they that they should not every moment be taken from their occupations, and separated from their families?

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, there was a distinction which he would recommend to the honourable gentleman's notice. When we had taken the proper means of precaution, and arranged our plan of defence, on the first intelligence of danger, the necessary force could be collected. It was proper that force should be kept in readiness, but it by no means followed that it should be always in

action. We ought not to confound the necessity of providing against the danger, and the necessity of subjecting the additional corps that were raised to act in case of emergency, to the strictness of constant and unremitting duty.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, he found from this qualification of the right honourable gentleman, that he did not consider the present situation of the country as a state of imminent danger; and so far he weakened his own argument.

After a few words from Sir W. YOUNG, Mr. BURDEN, Mr. YORKE, and Mr. BAKER, the clause passed without any amendment.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that he now came forward with a proposition which he would state in as few words as possible. His object was to move an amendment in the bill, for the purpose of doing away a distinction which he conceived to be odious and unjust. It was one of those distinctions, however, which he could wish to be done away rather gradually and quietly than by any clamour of debate. The distinction to which he alluded was excluding persons from a share in the defence of their country, in consequence of a difference of religious opinion. In the oath taken by those who served in the militia, they were required to swear that they were protestants. This, he remarked, was an exclusion of Roman Catholics inconsistent with the liberality of the present age. It was more particularly inconsistent in a war carried on for the re-establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in France, and in the prosecution of which we had been so intimately connected with Roman Catholic allies. We ought to recollect how many individuals of that description there were in Ireland, whom it was the policy of Ministers to conciliate. There could be no doubt that Roman Catholics would fight as bravely and as zealously in defence of the present system as any other class of subjects. He remarked that the necessity of this oath would operate particularly hard on Roman Catholic gamekeepers; and concluded with moving the amendment, That the words should be struck out of the oath—"I do swear that I am a Protestant."

The SPEAKER informed Mr. Sheridan that it was then too late to introduce an amendment, as all the amendments had previously been gone through, but that he would have an opportunity on the third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be read a third time to-morrow, if then engrossed.

The report of the Cavalry bill was brought up.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said he had consulted some gentlemen,

who thought it would be more convenient if in the discussion this bill was divided; he should therefore move that it might be recommitted for that purpose: he by no means, however, meant to relinquish that part which related to the gamekeepers.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that the right honourable gentleman had anticipated what was his intention. He meant to move that the bill should be recommitted, in order to divide it into two parts; as the right honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer was convinced of the propriety of this division, he did not despair to persuade him to abandon altogether that part which related to the gamekeepers. He affirmed, that the clauses were so full of errors, as to be quite unintelligible, and incapable of being corrected.

An instruction was then moved, That the Committee should be empowered to divide the bill into two parts, and the House resolved itself into the Committee.

The Committee then went through the bill, on which a good deal of conversation took place upon the clauses, between the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Curwen, Sir W. Milner, Mr. Biddulph, Lord Stanley, &c. &c.

Upon the clause respecting the quantum of contribution to be furnished by different persons in different places,

Mr. Alderman COMBE said, he did not rise merely to oppose the principle of the bill, though this was certainly very exceptionable; but he rose to propose an amendment which should embrace and secure the privileges of the city of London. For that city he had the honour to be chosen a representative, and he sincerely wished to respect, and inasmuch as he could, support those privileges and rights, which he was sorry to say had for sometime past been by some neglected, and by others materially invaded. Not long since certain measures had no sooner been agitated by the friends of the Minister in the city, than a certain party had agreed to them. When the navy volunteer measure was proposed, the late Members for the city supported it with amazing constancy. Indeed, all the endeavours of Ministers to assess and disfranchise the citizens of London had, for many years past, been but too successful. So much was this the case, that a particular measure was no sooner proposed than, as certainly as the shadow followed the substance, it met the acquiescence of some too credulous citizens. But acquiescence in the past instances would not be to him a guide in his conduct on this, or on any future occasion. A dangerous influence had, he knew, been long predominant in the public councils of his fellow-citizens, and this influence did not a little characterise the clause of the present bill, to which his objection should be directed. This

clause essentially affected the chartered rights of the city of London, and therefore it was that he should now propose the insertion of the words "except the city of London, and its liberties," to follow the words "the kingdom of Great Britain, &c.

Mr. Alderman LUSHINGTON, after seconding this motion, said, that no man, he was sure, could respect, no man be more solicitous to preserve the rights and privileges of his constituents, the citizens of London, than himself. On the present occasion he certainly agreed with his honourable colleague in the exception he had so justly taken to the particular clause in question.

The LORD MAYOR rose to express his acquiescence in those sentiments of his honourable colleagues, which had been so warmly expressed with regard to the sacredness of those rights for which the citizens had often sacrificed much, and to which they had been constitutionally attached. But though in these sentiments he could fully agree, he at the same time saw no just reason why the citizens of the metropolis should be exempted from such contributions as might be found necessary to place the country in a respectable state of defence. That there existed great and immediate danger of invasion he did not doubt; and therefore it was that he thought the city of London and its liberties should not be more particularly excepted on the present occasion, than other cities and corporations less important throughout the kingdom. He would, therefore, if the Committee were agreeable, prepare and propose a clause, which he had no doubt would fully answer every purpose of the amendment that had been just proposed by his honourable colleague.

Mr. Alderman ANDERSON said, that he held in his hand a clause, which he meant to propose to the Committee, and which would, he did not at all doubt, answer all the purposes of that suggested by Mr. Combe.

After some explanation from Alderman Combe, and a few words from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Fox, Alderman Anderson, &c. it was agreed that a clause should be inserted, with a provision, securing the privileges of the city of London; and the amendment was withdrawn.

The Committee proceeded to go through the different clauses, at the end of which the Lord Mayor brought up another clause, to save the city of London from being affected in any of its ancient rights and privileges by the precedent of the present bill, which being agreed to, the House resumed, and the report of the bill was ordered to be received to-morrow.

Mr. Chancellor PITT then said, he proposed bringing forward the bill relative to gamekeepers, separate from the other which the House had to-night been discussing in the Committee. He intend-

ed it to be read a first and second time, and committed to-morrow. He therefore moved, " That leave be given to bring in a bill to enable His Majesty to require the military services of persons therein described, to be embodied in case of necessity." **Granted.**

The House adjourned.

Wednesday, 2d November.

Mr. RYDER, in a Committee on the Corn Importation bill, gave notice, that it was his intention to move, that some instructions relative to damaged wheat should be referred to the consideration of the Committee. In consequence of the vast quantity of corn imported, a considerable part of it had remained so long on hand, that it had in a great measure become unfit for bread; but it was understood, that it might be applied to another beneficial purpose—he meant a proper use of it in distilleries, particularly as an article of great utility in fattening hogs, which formed an object of much consumption throughout the kingdom. The loss of the damaged wheat would necessarily bear hard upon the proprietors of it, and also on the public; and to remedy this, it was his idea to apply to particular purposes that part of the corn, which, though not exactly calculated for making bread, would be found highly beneficial in the distilleries. It would be necessary to examine the wheat which was in a damaged state, and use that quantity which, on a proper inquiry by the commissioners of the excise, might be deemed fit. He should therefore propose, that the Chairman do report progress, and move the House to sit again. Progress was accordingly reported; and it was agreed, that the Committee should take the subject into farther consideration to-morrow.

The LORD MAYOR gave notice, that he intended, after the recess, which he understood was shortly to take place, to submit to the consideration of the House, certain regulations, which had for their object the more completely ascertaining the assize of bread. The laws of assize, as they stood at that moment, were not adequate to the end for which they were instituted. He had, in his public situation as a Magistrate, many opportunities of witnessing their inefficacy; and had made them, for a considerable time past, the subject of his investigation. He had, in that pursuit, received the most zealous support from his brethren, who had with the greatest care looked into the deficiencies complained of, and joined most earnestly with him in pointing out provisions which might in a great measure go to remedy those deficiencies. It was his wish to meet with the concurrence of the Magistrates of the different counties, who might, in the interval of the adjournment, inquire into the evil, and come forward in support of so desirable an object. Gentlemen would, during that period, have time to

turn the subject in their thoughts, and make every necessary investigation. He therefore gave notice, that he should, immediately after the recess, submit to the consideration of the House, certain regulations which went to amend the existing laws of the assize of bread.

Mr. ABBOT said, that in consequence of the notice which he had given some few days ago, but which the course of business before the House had then prevented from taking effect, he would now beg leave to call the attention of the House to a subject which he conceived to be of great public importance; *the present defective state of the promulgation of the Statutes.*

Sir, at the close of the last Parliament, this grievance was pointed out in the Report of a Committee upon the temporary laws; and the notoriety of the grievance is such, that I believe I need appeal to no other proof of its existence than the experience of every man within and without those walls, whose situation in life has at any time, in any degree, engaged him in the administration of justice. The plain fact is this; that the Magistrates, who are entrusted with the execution of the laws, have not any correct and speedy means of knowing the laws which they are required to enforce; and His Majesty's subjects in general are exposed to the hazard of dissolving laws of which they have no direct communication whatever.

With regard, Sir, to the causes by which the evil exists, most certainly no present blame is personally imputable any where. The truth is, that the evil has come upon us by the change of customs which naturally belongs to a change of times; and when the older usage of proclaiming Statutes by the Sheriff was suspended by the introduction of printing, we can only wonder, that our ancestors did not at that æra substitute some better method of promulgation by the very means of which they had acquired the facility. But, Sir, no such step was then taken; and the grievance has since grown gradually, with the annual multiplication of our Statutes, to such a magnitude as demands an immediate and effectual remedy.

That an adequate remedy should be given, the dignity of Parliament require, and its wisdom will undoubtedly provide. At the same time, however, if an apprehension should be entertained by any gentleman, that purposes like these, in times like these, ought to be limited by considerations of œconomy, I believe I may venture to alledge, that means will probably be found arising out of the arrangement of the business, and out of the very improvement of the present system, which may furnish an effectual distribution upon a scale of very considerable extent, even without enhancing the

public expenditure in any degree whatever. What that arrangement may be, through what channels the promulgation may be best carried, and to what objects it may be best directed, I should conceive to be the proper province of a Committee to inquire. By that Committee, such data may be collected, and such observations upon the materials before them may be prepared for the use of the House, as may enable it afterwards to form a maturer judgement upon the whole question. And ultimately I cannot doubt, but that Parliament will give to our laws, that which has been so long and so greatly wanting, an expeditious, extensive, and effectual publicity.

He then moved, "That a Committee might be appointed to consider of the most effectual mode of promulgating the Statutes of the realm, and to report the same, with their observations, to the House."

Mr. WILBERFORCE said, that it was with great pleasure he seconded the motion of his honourable friend. The evil alluded to was, he knew, one of considerable magnitude. It was daily felt, and ought therefore to be instantly remedied. This, he knew, the Magistrates were ill able to do; it therefore peculiarly became that House, to institute such an inquiry as had been moved for by the learned gentleman. Magistrates had, he was aware, often been called upon to execute laws, of which, in the words of the honourable mover, they knew nothing, not even their existence. But the truth of this, was no proof of either the incapacity or inattention of Magistrates. It was a proof only of that growth and accumulation of evils in this case so justly complained of. He was confident that there did not preside in any country a more honest, liberal, and enlightened body of men than the Magistrates of Great Britain. But it was impossible, that even possessing these great and good qualities, they could know the extent and provisions of a law, the utmost range of which had perhaps puzzled the Courts of King's Bench, Exchequer, and Common Pleas. Mr. Wilberforce paid some handsome compliments to Mr. Abbott; he said, if great and cultivated talents, if benevolence of nature, if superior ingenuity could entitle the suggestions of one man more than those of another to peculiar attention, he was sure the honourable mover would be so distinguished. To form and arrange the means of promulgating the Statutes of the realm, Mr. Wilberforce thought his learned friend fully competent. It was for this reason that he had felt a pride in seconding the present motion, and he sincerely thanked the honourable gentleman for bringing forward a subject which had for its object such great national advantage.

The motion was agreed to, and the following Select Committee was named :

The Master of the Rolls	Mr. Bramster
The Attorney General	Mr. Mainwaring
The Solicitor General	Mr. Banks
The Lord Advocate of Scotland	Mr. Hobart
Mr. Serjeant Adair	Mr. L. Hawkins Browne
Sir William Scott	Mr. Wilberforce
Mr. Powys	Mr. Abbot.

The bill for funding the navy bills was read a first time.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that as it might be found convenient for the House to adjourn for some days, perhaps it would be proper to discharge the orders for such election petitions as stood fixed for any day between the 10th and 24th of November; he should therefore move that the orders for the consideration of such petitions be discharged. Agreed to.

Accordingly the order for taking into consideration the petitions from Leominster, Melbourne Port, and Tregony, were severally discharged and renewed. Leominster, Thursday the 24th---Melbourne Port, Monday the 29th of November; and Tregony, Thursday the 1st of December.

The Militia Augmentation bill was brought up, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved a clause to allow a provision to be made, at the discretion of the Magistrates, for the families of those who served under this bill, for the twenty days during which they were called out to be disciplined.

Sir WILLIAM YOUNG said he had many objections to the provisions made by the act. Many children would necessarily be thrown on the parishes, which were already heavily encumbered. Exemptions might be adopted upon the principle of the old militia laws, particularly where the number of ten children should be found in a family.

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied, that the clause which he proposed was of a general nature; and that, when it was received, the number of ten, or any other number of children, might be introduced.

Sir WILLIAM YOUNG said, he did not mean to oppose the clause.

After a few words from Mr. Jolliffe, the Speaker submitted it to the right honourable gentleman, whether it would not be more regular to refer the clause, as a pecuniary matter, to the consideration of a Committee of the whole House.

Mr. Chancellor PITT having acquiesced, the clause was read a first and second time, and the House went into a Committee of the whole House.

The blanks were then filled up, and the clause agreed to, reported, and received.

Sir WILLIAM YOUNG rose to move an amendment. He observed, that an exemption had always taken place in the best regulated States with respect to the number of children in a family. The right honourable gentleman might suppose the necessity of not extending the exemption to a certain number of children; but he begged leave to observe, that such a supposition was a very dangerous mode of arguing, as it went to shew the weakness of our resources. It was a proof that men could not be easily found in a kingdom which had eight millions of inhabitants. When a man, who had seven or eight children, was called out on duty for twenty days together, he certainly could not return in the same state himself, or even find his family in the state he left it; nor could he be considered so valuable a member of society as before. He should therefore move, that the words "nor any poor man having more than two children," be inserted.

He said, this was an amendment, the adoption of which would not, he hoped, be opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In all countries, in all ages, even from the days of Athenian freedom, to the reign of despotism in Russia, exceptions had been made on occasions of military levies in favour of the poor man of a large family. He indeed relied more on the judgement of the right honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer than upon that of any man alive; but then he would take upon him to say, that gentlemen, accustomed to fill official situations in the country, were better qualified to judge of the propriety of measures, the operation of which would be confined entirely to parishes. It would be extremely hard were the parishioners of every parish in England to be burdened with the children of persons, whose services had been required by the country.

Mr. JOILIFFE concurred in these observations; and thought that the burden, as the clause now stood, would be very generally and grievously felt throughout the kingdom. If it extended to all men, those of large families might purposely be induced to enter, in order to relieve themselves from the charge of maintaining them.

Mr. CURWEN suggested the propriety of giving a discretionary power to Magistrates on the subject of this pecuniary relief, as in many manufacturing places, children might be able to get their own livelihood.

Mr. Chancellor PITT here proposed, instead of the words "two children," the insertion of the words "three children."

Mr. SHERIDAN observed, that though he neither agreed with the honourable Baronet nor with the Chancellor of the Exchequer,

as to the necessity of the measure, still he conceived it his duty to suggest what appeared to be, to him, the inefficacy of their respective amendments. The number of children to be allowed to each man, said Mr. Sheridan, is the object of arrangement, but a word has not been said about the ages at which they must have arrived to form fit exceptions. He thought it perfectly advisable to make some limitation relative to the age of the children, who might in some cases be grown up, and separated from their parents.

Mr. Chancellor PITT proposed, that the amendment should include only such children as might be found under ten years of age. Agreed to.

The question was then put on the first amendment, and negatived without a division.

The House then divided upon the amendment of the Chancellor of the Exchequer,

Ayes, 93; Noes, 22. Majority, 71.

The different amendments were then gone through, and the bill read a third time and passed.

The report of the Cavalry bill was brought up, and the first part of it being read,

General TARLETON observed, that as he conceived the country to be arrived at the most critical and awful period of its history, and perhaps of its existence, as a free country, as there did not appear to be more than one step to intervene, before we descended from liberty to slavery, he should now claim the indulgence of the House, whilst he entered his conscientious and solemn protest against the system of measures then under consideration. When a menaced invasion is loosely intimated to the House—when large quotas of money or personal service are called for—when a considerable addition is to be made to the army—he thought it both the business and duty of its Members to resort to the practice of their ancestors in similar situations, if similar situations could be found. In all allusions to historical facts, he placed himself under the correction of the House, as, undoubtedly, many or most of the honourable gentlemen were more conversant with the annals of the country than he could pretend to be. The same means of correction extended to any consequence he should falsely deduce from the authority of history. And he professed, that he gladly adverted to the practice of our ancestors, because upon the most minute examination he found, that the time, talents, and labour of our forefathers had been, unlike the practice of the last Parliament, directed to the extension and not the abridgement of liberty. In this historical detail he thought it unnecessary to dwell upon the circumstances in the year 1688, as there was no analogy

between that and the present case. On that occasion a protestant Prince was invited by a large party to pass over to these kingdoms, to dethrone a bigoted and tyrannical king, who wished and attempted to overthrow the liberties of the subject both in church and state. He should therefore pass over the reigns of William and Mary and Queen Anne, and proceed to the period when the illustrious house of Brunswick mounted the throne of England. Soon after the accession of King George I. when Great Britain enjoyed profound peace with foreign powers, but when a strong Jacobite party existed in this country; when a pretender to the throne likewise existed, and insurrections had commenced in these kingdoms: His Majesty informed his Parliament on the 15th of July, 1715, "that rebellion was begun at home, and an invasion threatened from abroad." Addresses were directed to the King—the guards were encamped in Hyde Park—arrangements were made for the defence of the coasts—and orders were given for raising thirteen regiments of dragoons and eight of infantry. The whole military force of the kingdom at this period, the new levy included, could not be estimated at 40,000 men. The death of that despot Louis XIV. which happened at this period contributed, not a little to defeat the enterprize of the Pretender. Again we find, continued the General, in 1718, his Catholic Majesty warmly espoused the cause of the Pretender, and an expedition was fitted out in Spain: the command of the fleet and army was entrusted to the Duke of Ormond; who sailed from Cadiz, and proceeded as far as Cape Finisterre, where his fleet was dispersed by a storm. His Majesty communicated to both Houses the frequent advices he had received—they desired him to augment his forces, which were small, and they would make good the expence. The next demonstration of invasion took place in 1743. Early in that year it was known in England that a body of French troops had moved for that purpose to the coast most contiguous to England, under the orders of one of the most celebrated officers of his age, Count Saxe, afterwards Marshal of France. On the 15th of February George II. sent a message to both Houses, intimating "the arrival of the Pretender's son in France; the preparations at Dunkirk, and the appearance of a French fleet in the Channel." On this occasion, it must be universally acknowledged the situation of the country was truly alarming. In a time of profound peace, when the military force in the kingdom was comparatively very small, the French admiral, supposing himself superior at sea, sailed from Brest up the Channel, and anchored off Dungeness, in order to co-operate with the military force distributed along the coast of France. But in the event Sir John Norris with the English fleet

made him precipitately retire from the coast of England ; and history says, “ that the coast was so well guarded that the enterprize could not be prosecuted with any probability of success.” Even in 1745 invasion would not have been attempted if an important dispatch from the Pretender’s party in this kingdom had not miscarried ; for in that instrument they laid it down as a principle not to be deviated from, that it was necessary a large French army should land in this country, before his adherents should arm or assemble. The consequences of that enterprize need not be detailed, therefore, the general said, he should direct the attention of the House to the menaces and demonstration of invasion held out in the year 1756. The threats of the French court, and the movements of their troops towards the coast, were in fact, productive of, or chiefly instrumental to, the commencement of the war. No embarkation however took place.

In the year 1759, when the war with France was conducted with energy and ability, King George II. sent messages to the two Houses of Parliament by Lord Holderness and Mr. Pitt, the illustrious father of the right honourable gentleman ; signifying that his Majesty had received advices of preparations making by the French court for the invasion of England ; the Militia was then only ordered out, although the war had been carried on for some years. But the administration of that day wisely placed their chief dependence on the strength of the navy, for they neither drew any of the troops from Germany, nor counteracted the expedition to America—and a grateful posterity surveys with thankful admiration, the battle of Minden and the fall of Quebec. The British navy under the conduct of the gallant Hawke seconded the wise dispositions of the Administration, and a severe blow given to the French fleet off their own coast, produced a glorious termination of the threatened invasion. With respect to the demonstration made in the channel by the combined fleets of France and Spain, in the year 1779, the General said, it was unnecessary to trouble the House: one observation he should only make, which was, that the Executive Power had done well in placing our naval arsenals at Portsmouth and Plymouth in a situation of defence, which raised them above any alarm from a coup de main. Of all the menaced invasions, therefore, that of 1743 seems to have been the most formidable, if we look into the best authorities upon that subject, or impartially survey the relative situations of the two countries.

In a time of profound peace Louis XV. ordered a body of veteran troops under the auspices of a justly celebrated general to advance to the sea coast. The title to the crown was disputed—a be-

lief of naval superiority was so strongly entertained that the French Admiral anchored off Dungeness. In England the Militia was not embodied, the regular troops were insignificant, and a powerful party of Jacobites in England corresponded with the enemy, and was ready to co-operate on the moment of invasion. What is the situation of Great Britain, the General said, in the year 1796? There does not exist, the House is convinced, a Pretender to the Throne. We have upwards of 100,000 men at this moment embodied within the island, and the army, we all know, is well affected to the existing Government of the country. We have besides this regular force, some thousands of volunteer infantry and yeomanry cavalry—a description of persons very unlike those mentioned in last night's debate. We have a fleet unequalled in numbers, and with pride and pleasure he boasted, unequalled in gallantry and skill, if we even resorted to the glorious pages of our national naval history. And instead of being menaced at a time of peace and in an unprepared state, activity and preparation pervaded every part of the island. In addition to these important advantages we have the affirmation of the right honourable gentleman, on the first day of the session, that the French armies in Germany were nearly annihilated. And, although, the General said, he could not admit of that assertion to its full extent, yet he admitted the prospect of military operations in that quarter had undergone a considerable change since the month of July. At that period, without adverting to the prosperous situation of the French in Italy, they had two victorious armies moving forward towards Vienna. The armies of Jourdan and Moreau had attained the frontiers of Bohemia and Bavaria, and their future operations threatened the destruction of the Emperor's power in Germany, or that he would most probably be compelled to accede to pacification, without consulting or attending to the interests of this country.

To what causes, the sudden reverses the French armies experienced, where to be attributed, the General continued, it was not necessary to detail, because such a detail had no reference to the argument he was then offering to the House: it was sufficient to observe, that a material alteration had taken place, and to notice cursorily that one army in its retreat to the Rhine, had been as conspicuous for its skill, discipline, and valour, as the other for mismanagement, disorganization, and disgrace. In the month of October, then we find, those armies, which, in July and August, seemed able to destroy the Empire, or force the Emperor to a separate peace, driven back to the Rhine. Whilst the operations in Germany were favourable to the French, when they threatened the destruc-

tion of our bravest ally, when his fate seemed almost inevitable, when the season of the year was particularly favourable to the French for extending their victorious career, and pointing their full force against the shores of this country : What line of conduct did His Majesty's Ministers then adopt or pursue ? Did they then, exclaimed the General, take any decisive or effectual measure ? Were any extraordinary exertions made ? Did they issue out any proclamation ? Did they call Parliament together ? No. — But now when the danger is past, when the designs of the French are frustrated, when their armies have suffered considerable losses, when the season of operation is almost over, and what remains of it will be employed in securing their communications upon the Upper and Lower Rhine, in reinforcing their armies, and in re-establishing discipline, this country is called upon for an additional force of 103,000 men to ward off invasion. In this dilemma, the General said, he should leave them : Either that the danger was greater in October, or that they were guilty of supineness in July ; and proceed to offer some general observations which he had entertained, he hoped not lightly or foolishly, respecting the possibility or probability of invasion.

After mature deliberation with respect to the parts of the French coast, from whence embarkation might be made, or invasion attempted ; he considered it necessary for the sake of perspicuity, to divide the line of the French coast, or the country under the influence of the Republic, into three parts. The coast lying between Brest and Dunkirk, appeared to him ill calculated for any considerable enterprize ; petty expeditions might be fitted out, or embarkation might be made ; but as the coast in general is low, the water shallow, no large rivers except the Seine, no good ports, commodious havens, or secure harbours, great armaments could not be undertaken. These natural disadvantages, he seriously thought, could not be remedied by science or ingenuity. The port of Cherbourg had cost millions, and had availed nothing to France ; he should, therefore, next consider Brest, and the French ports upon the western coast of France. From these commodious ports and harbours, expeditions and armaments of all proportions might be fitted out, which might give jealousy either to the West Indies or Ireland. No apprehension could reasonably be entertained for Kent, Sussex, or Hampshire ; because, in addition to the British navy, which might naturally be supposed ready to defeat any such enterprize, the local situation of those counties opposed many and insurmountable difficulties. He should terminate his observations on this part of the subj. & with one short remark, that it is the business and duty

of ~~wise~~ statesmen to develop the false and the real attack, and take measures accordingly. With respect to the local situation of the coast between Dunkirk and the Texel, the enemy, by the possession of Holland, enjoyed great advantages. In such large rivers as the Waal, the Leck, the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt, immense quantities of vessels and transports might be collected, large armies might be embarked. Besides, the most vulnerable part of England lay exposed to a descent from that quarter. But the House must have observed with much satisfaction the recent transactions in Holland; a large proportion of the army of the North had been sent to the assistance of the retreating army of General Jourdan. Undoubted information had arrived in this country, that General Bournonville, the provisional commander of that army, had advanced beyond Dusseldorf, and no accounts had declared that the corps remaining in Holland had received reinforcements. When he heard, therefore, that part of His Majesty's European dominions was threatened, he confessed his mind was involved in doubt with respect to the quarter where such attack could take place. At first, he imagined Corfica was in danger; he was relieved from doubt on that subject, because that on the same evening that the expression proceeded from the Ministerial bench of the House of Commons, the newspapers proclaimed to the world that Corfica was evacuated.—Naples had made peace with France,—and Spain declared war on England. This equivocal expression of European dominions, seemed therefore principally intended for our sister kingdom. Are we to create a false alarm in England, in order to conceal a real alarm in Ireland? Are we to burden the people of England by raising 100,000 men, in order to spare 20,000 for the defence of Ireland? Away with such crooked and detestable policy! Rather restore to a large proportion of the people of Ireland their rights.—Restore to an oppressed and persecuted body of men, their privileges as citizens; and you will give confidence to Irishmen, and security to Ireland. The General afterwards proceeded to calculate the numbers of the military forces now maintained by the country. According to the army estimates, the numbers of land troops within and without the kingdom exceeded 200,000 men. By the same documents it would be found, 100,000 and upwards were then within the precincts of Great Britain. He enumerated the militia, the regular cavalry, the fencible infantry, the fencible cavalry, the guards, the artillery; and he did not omit, in addition to this formidable force, the mention of the volunteer infantry, and the yeomanry cavalry. When he had detailed the different descriptions of corps of which the army was

composed, he conjured the House to pay some attention to the expence, which might be calculated by resorting to papers which had been laid upon the table. He believed he understated the expence, when he said, the army alone of Great Britain last year exceeded fifteen millions, and, therefore, he could not suppose when the representatives of the people looked seriously at their situation with respect to invasion, and at the enormous and almost insupportable expence of the army on its present footing, that they would subject their constituents to the additional expence of 100,000 more soldiers, to be raised in a manner fraught with difficulties, and vexations unparalleled even in the history of the present Administration.

But on this occasion Ministers have resorted to the plea of necessity. What ground is laid for that necessity? If they want men for Ireland, let them state that necessity to the people of England. They are a generous people, and feel much for the interests and happiness of the sister kingdom. Whenever that argument of necessity, or rather requisition is thus used, Ministers need resort to no other pretext for infringing all laws and institutions; and if such maxims and practices prevail, what will become of national liberty? What authority is left to the statutes upon the table? Without doubt, all the privileges of the nation—transmitted through so many ages—secured by so many laws, and purchased with the blood of so many heroes and patriots, will lie prostrate at the feet of the Executive Power. And as to the pretence, that the Executive Power is sole judge of the necessity, what is it but to subject all the privileges of the nation to its arbitrary will and pleasure? To expect that the Public will be convinced by such reasoning must aggravate the general indignation, by adding to violence against men's persons and property, so cruel a mockery of their understanding. The General then recapitulated the heads upon which he had dilated, earnestly beseeching the House to advert to the arguments which had been used by himself and his honourable friends against the bills, especially the Cavalry bill, which had occupied as yet, more attention and discussion than the other parts of the system introduced by Ministers. Every officer, he said, in the house must unite with him in saying, that the Minister's plan of enrolling the men without having them trained or exercised, would be productive of no advantage whatever to the service, and every inhabitant in the island would concur with him, in pronouncing the plan both impracticable and vexatious. He now finished his observations, in which he trusted he had shewn that messages have always been sent by His Majesty to Parliament whenever there were any appre-

hensions of invasion, to acquaint it with the enemy's designs and situations. That every dereliction of the principles of the Constitution ought at all times to be carefully avoided—that there was no rational ground laid for serious invasion of this island in the course of the winter—that the placing unnecessarily 100,000 men under martial law, is a hardship on the people, as well as an unconstitutional act—that the navy of England, the surest safeguard of the nation, exceeded the naval appointments of any other period of our history—and that the augmentation proposed, both as to manner and magnitude, ought to be rejected by the Commons of England. Upon these grounds he hoped the House would not adopt the resolution.

Mr. FOX.---My utter disapprobation of this bill, upon general grounds, as well as of the particular parts of it, has been already expressed. I thought it, upon the first view, a bill which hardly any alteration could have made useful. I think it even now, although much labour has been bestowed upon it in the Committee, a bill highly inexpedient, extremely difficult, if not wholly impracticable, tending to create a great expence, without affording the hope of raising a force that will be available to us should the hour of danger arrive. With regard to many parts of it, as they stood at first, and as they stand now, I confess they are such as I have not been able to make my understanding comprehend. But I took the speech of the Minister for the purpose of illustration, and with that assistance I confess myself to be very much in the dark. I understand, however, that upon payment of the sum of 15l. the material purposes of the bill may be evaded. I do not mean the word evaded to be applied as a reproach to those who may wish to screen themselves from the effect of the bill, and therefore I should say, that for the sum of 15l. the material purposes of the bill may be avoided. That expence, however, will amount to no less than a sum of 300,000l. which must, in that event, be a tax upon the people of this country. It is stated by the advocates for this and other measures of a similar nature, that such will not be the general effect of the bill, but that it will create a very great force for a very useful purpose. Then I refer to the bill itself, in which I find so much intricacy, so much difficulty, so much perplexity, as will, I think, render it entirely impracticable. What is the answer to this? That we are in a state of so much danger that we had better pass the bill, imperfect as it is, than expose ourselves to the inconveniencies which might arise, if such a measure were not adopted. I own I do not think so; for, in case of an actual invasion, I have no doubt that we should immediately raise a body of cavalry equal

at least to this; greater, I trust, and much more effectual than this would ever be: and therefore I can see no utility whatever in the present bill. But its advocates advance a singular argument in its favour. They say it is peculiarly necessary at this moment. Such is their argument upon the 2d of November. We were told on the 6th of October, in the King's speech, that an invasion was threatened. We have been told since, that such intention was so clearly pointed out to us, that we recognised it so clearly as to be bound to every measure of this nature without taking notice of any expence which may attend it. Those who advised His Majesty to make that speech, and who urged this House to address His Majesty in consequence of that speech, were then aware of the necessity of this measure. Now I ask, if this House should submit to hear, and, if it does submit to hear, that such a bill on the 2d of November is so imperfect as to be difficult even to be comprehended, when its authors knew of the danger on the 6th of October? The Public will naturally think there has been time to propose a much less imperfect measure; something that had less intricacy, less perplexity, and less difficulty. I say, therefore, the argument which tends to maintain we had better pass this bill, imperfect as it is, than incur the danger of an invasion without such preparation, comes singularly enough from the authors of this bill. Then comes the argument, that this bill, which I say is liable to so many objections, and will be, I believe, impracticable, is a measure likely to create more difficulty to this country than would arise from an actual invasion. I say, that viewing the bill as I do, it would be easier to raise an effectual cavalry in time of invasion, than to enforce with any degree of advantage this bill. What sort of cavalry will this bill provide? Are they to be trained? I believe there is no provision that will be effectual in that respect. Should the advocates of the present bill say it is useful to us to have a large force of cavalry well trained and disciplined, I could understand the sense of such an observation. Such cavalry, I admit, would be useful in the hour of danger; but that observation is not applicable to the present bill. The force, as I understand it, will continue to be untrained and undisciplined, and consequently no better than a force raised in the moment of danger. Taking the subject in that view, I would rather trust to the energy of the people at the hour of danger, than raise so inefficient a force as I conceive this will be; for should we rely on the energy of the people in the hour of danger, we might safely call upon every man, not for one horse out of ten, not for one horse out of three, but for every horse in his possession, in which case we should have all the power which can be called into action; but by

this we can have no efficient force, although we entail upon the public an enormous expence; an expence, in my view of the subject, almost, if not entirely, useless. I am sensible, that on this part of the argument some persons will consider that the whole question is a speculative one, depending upon the probability of danger. It may be so; but can be so only to a certain degree; and then comes to be decided the question, how much inconvenience the public should be made to suffer, in order to prepare against the supposed probability of danger? The proportion between the inconvenience and the danger appears to me such as cannot warrant any thing like the inconvenience with which this measure must be attended. Should the hour of real danger arrive, you will have, without law, much more effectual force to defend you than you can ever hope to have by the enactment of any law; for in case of actual necessity you may rely on the courage, the zeal, and the ardour of the whole mass of the people of this country. But by the present measure you will not have any force that will in any considerable degree be available to the Public. I am aware of the common-place and flimsy answer which may be made to this: "True, this force will not be so great as that which would arise from the zeal and ardour of the people, should an actual invasion take place; but this measure may tend to prevent that invasion." Gentlemen disposed to listen to such an observation, would do well to consider the situation of this country and of France, as ably stated to-night by my honourable friend. But should they not be satisfied with his observations upon the subject, let them consider the statement of Ministers themselves in that particular. Can any man think that an invasion of this country will be either forwarded or retarded by the passing or rejecting of this bill? I am sure that an invasion, if made, must be made (as already stated by the Minister himself) either for diversion in one place, to conceal intentions of attacking seriously in another, or seriously for the purpose of throwing this country into confusion. Neither of these purposes can be either forwarded or delayed by such a bill as this. I cannot, therefore, see its utility as a measure intended to prevent invasion. I see, therefore, before me, a choice of two things—either to adopt a measure which will produce great inconvenience, confusion, and perplexity, and be attended by great expence, without providing security for the danger; or to rely on that which, I have no doubt, will repel the danger without previous inconvenience or expence. I therefore cannot hesitate to declare, that rather than adopt a bill which to its declared object is inadequate, I would rely on the courage and magnanimity of the people when the danger shall arrive: for in the event of such a danger,

you will have as much force to defend you as if this bill had never passed; and I think, that when it passes, the real security of the country will not be in the smallest degree increased. It therefore appears to me to tend to nothing but inconvenience and embarrassment. I know that it has been said to the people of this country, "We only call upon you, now, to do a part of that, which we know you would perform without it, should the danger require your exertions." True, but you call upon them for a great expence; you put them to great inconvenience; and after all, I say your measure is inadequate to the object which you profess. If the bill was merely intended to operate as an inquiry into the number of horses kept in this country, that might lead to useful information, if Government stood in need of it—but that they know already. If it was to inquire into the quality of these horses, that might also be useful information; but if Government wishes really to possess it, let them call on Parliament to pass a bill for that purpose, without passing a bill which puts the people to great difficulties, and which will not add to their security in time of real emergency. These observations, I admit, do not apply to the probability of an invasion. I shall now proceed to state to the House my opinion generally upon that subject. I have at different periods of my life formed different opinions, from different circumstances, as to the danger of an invasion of this country. In 1779, there were few persons more apprehensive than myself of the probability of that event. In the year 1796, few, indeed, less apprehensive of that danger. If the moment should arrive, which God avert! if France should become superior in naval force to this country so as to be able to command the channel, then, indeed, a man of the strongest mind and nerves may be apprehensive of an invasion. If the French should obtain footing in this island, and have from thence a communication with the continent, then, indeed, we should be in danger; even then, I trust, they could not dismay us. But while we are superior at sea, I will not say an invasion is wholly impracticable—although I confess I see but little danger of it, should the enemy chuse to risk it. They may, by taking advantage of the direction in which the wind may blow, land considerable forces in this island; but I consider them as not likely to make such a rash attempt, for they must consider the whole of an army dispatched upon such an expedition, as a force to be entirely sacrificed. Under such circumstances certainly they would never return; therefore, I think, that under such circumstances they will never be sent. It must be obvious to the House that I do not here allude to the landing of a few men upon some part of your coast to

commit some small depredations; that perhaps might happen almost at any time; but I am speaking of invasion in the generally received idea of that calamity. I know we are not upon all occasions to trust to the prudence of our enemies, for they may undertake that which is manifestly imprudent. True it is they have sent great armies upon desperate expeditions. We have known great forces sacrificed to great enterprises. We have had abundant instances of their boldness, but I do not think that from all the experience we have had of their conduct in this war, we are justified in apprehending that they will undertake a measure so obviously against their interest as an invasion of this country at the present time. I say, therefore, that an invasion of this country by the French is not a probable event. I am not one of those who wish the French to land in this country merely for the purpose of their meeting, what I am sure they would, total destruction. I do not wish the valour of the people of England to be shewn upon such an occasion. An invasion, whatever its event, must always be regarded as a serious evil; but great as such an evil would be to Great Britain at this moment, were I compelled to take choice between that evil, and a continuance of the present war for two years, I would, as the friend of the real interests of this country, prefer an invasion as the lesser calamity of the two. I say this of a real invasion; but if there is no probability of that event, look at the situation into which this country may be brought, by acting as if every menace of invasion was to be followed up by its reality. You will expend millions after millions in preparing against threats which were never intended to be executed; and should your enemy discover this to be your disposition, they may complete your ruin without either loss or danger to themselves; for surely nothing can be easier, nor less expensive, than to threaten you with invasion. In judging, therefore, of this event, as in judging of all events, you must compare all the circumstances, and form your opinion of the probability. The expences of this country are already extremely great; by the documents upon your table, your military force appears little short of 100,000 men at this hour; I therefore would advise you to make a judicious disposal of the force which you possess already; that would be much more likely to be beneficial than any thing which this bill can produce. I am laying it down as a thing not disputed, and without which this country cannot long exist, that an invasion would immediately call forth all the energy, all the zeal, and all the real power of this nation, and therefore it is that I do not fear the danger of invasion. I may be told, that "true it is, an invasion would have that effect; but of what avail would be all our energy

and all our zeal, if a great number had not arms in their hands?" I do not mean to contend that zeal alone can defend a nation; but the zeal of men, even without arms, is a very formidable thing; the repeated experience of those who have invaded countries can give us pretty clear evidence on the subject. Should this be doubted, I would refer to those who invaded France in an early period of the present war. I would refer again to those who took part against America. I would then ask whether there is not much correctness in the doctrine which attributes great strength to zeal. Should my ideas upon this subject be erroneous, that will not furnish an argument in favour of the present bill; for I do not understand that the numbers to be collected under it, are to be trained or disciplined, or to possess any particular advantage as a military force; therefore there is nothing to make it more useful than the spontaneous effect of zeal would be when occasion required its exertion. I confess, therefore, that as I see no probability of invasion, I see no utility whatever in the present measure.

But it has been said, it is not for Great Britain only we ought to be anxious. Those who have attended to me in the course of what I have had occasion to urge on those topics, will remember that I always confined myself to Great Britain solely with very studious care, because I wanted to know whether any part of this force was intended to enable Ministers to carry on operations in other parts of His Majesty's dominions. I understood, but not till very lately, that Ministers have some apprehensions with regard to Ireland. If such indeed is the case, if they believe the enemy have serious intentions to invade that part of His Majesty's possessions, I own I should be as ready as any man in this House, or in this country, to assent to any measure tending to prevent such calamity. We are not to determine which of the two islands they mean to attack. One of them is as serious an object to be defended as the other, and therefore I, for one, have brought my mind to assent to any thing which may be really conducive to the defence and security of both. I cannot, however, help wishing we had a little more authentic information of the danger than we actually have. But I will own that from the words I heard uttered by the Minister the night before last, that from the whole tenor of his speech upon that subject, and the manner he adopted (for the manner of a speaker upon important occasions constitutes part of his speech), I am more convinced than once I was, he had some apprehensions of the probability of an invasion; it was upon that principle I acceded to the bill which passed this House to-night. When he expressed some apprehension of danger to Great Britain, I thought very lightly of

it; but when under the title of His Majesty's other European possessions, he alluded to Ireland, I had no difficulty in believing the reality of his alarm. That Ministers should be alarmed at the state of Ireland cannot be wonderful; but here I cannot help saying to His Majesty's Ministers, "If you are seriously alarmed at the state of Ireland, if you are desirous of preventing distraction there, if you are disposed to restore to it confidence and harmony, give to your Ministers there instructions similar to those under which Lord Fitzwilliam lent his assistance to your councils. Renounce the principles and practices that occasioned his recall. Remove those odious marks of distinction, which disgrace the policy of your government in that country. Allow the Catholics to possess their just rights. Let it not be a matter in which the policy of your government should interfere, in what way a man shall proceed to church, or exercise his devotion. If you are indeed seriously disposed to wish Irishmen to be contented, give them a constitution. Do not insult them with a contemptible monopoly, under the name of a Parliament. Do not provoke their indignation, with an image which is but the mockery of the Parliament of Great Britain. If you are indeed in earnest, in wishing to appease the anger of the inhabitants of Ireland, the remedy is, I think, before you, for I hope it is not yet too late. It is not the question here how you conducted yourselves with regard to Lord Fitzwilliam; but should you ask me whether I had rather the principles on which he consented to aid your councils, were restored to Ireland, and whether I should think them more effectual to restore tranquillity there than 20,000 men from Great Britain, I should have no difficulty in giving you an answer. Can I have a doubt upon such a subject? Can I have a doubt that if Irishmen were treated as they ought to be, that an invasion in Ireland would be attended with the same destruction to the invaders, as it would in England?" I could wish that those who recalled Lord Fitzwilliam attended to these observations.—I could wish that those who seem desirous to put the laborious classes of men in that country on a footing, as it were, with cattle, reflected on the danger in which they are involving that island. I could wish that the mass of the people of Ireland should be treated like men, not like oxen and sheep. When I reflect, however, that Ministers have not retracted their nefarious principles, when I perceive they have not begun to re-tread their steps, I own I am inclined to draw this inference,—that whatever I may know of that country, they know also, and know a great deal more, and they have taken no measure to change the condition of the mass of the people of Ireland. I should therefore conclude that they have no serious apprehensions.

of an invasion of that country; else, how was it possible to account, not only for their obstinate perseverance in their political sentiments, but also for their leaving the country in its present defenceless state? They know, and ought to feel the danger. I have proposed to them the only remedy which, in my conscience, I believe is adequate to remove the danger. By the conduct I have advised them to pursue, I believe they would unite the people of that country. But I may be told by some that this is but idle railing; that there is no reason to complain of the form of government in Ireland.—That in Ireland they have their House of Lords—by the way, there are some who think the House of Lords even of Great Britain has been too much enlarged. If any man has a mind to defend the House of Lords of Great Britain, and to insist upon its purity, I would advise him to compare it with the House of Lords of Ireland, for then I am sure he will have a complete defence. There are many, and I confess I am of the number, who think that we are not in this House so truly, so justly, so adequately, the representatives of the people of Great Britain as we ought, and as some of us profess to be; but if any man is disposed to defend us, to maintain we are the Commons of Great Britain in their purity, I cannot recommend to him a better plan to conduct his defence, than to refer to the House of Commons of Ireland, for certainly he may then appeal to all who know us both, and ask whether, if satisfaction can be derived from comparison, we are not almost perfect? I know that in mere form, Great Britain and Ireland have the same government upon paper; but it is not upon paper that men are to look for security to their freedom. I may perhaps hereafter enter more in detail into the subject of the Constitution of Ireland; I only wish now to make a few allusions to it, and I could not do it more aptly, I think, than by comparing it with that of the Constitution of Great Britain. I remember a story which, with permission, I will relate shortly. A gentleman was enamoured of a lady whom he thought extremely beautiful, but with whose beauty others were not so enraptured; some of them ventured to insinuate they saw defects in her. He wondered at the deficiency of their taste, for he could perceive in her nothing but the most perfect beauty. But when he saw her sister, who was something like her, although not so handsome, he immediately exclaimed, now that I have seen her caricature, I am enabled to form some idea of her own defects. Now I desire lovers (although to lovers advice is seldom very useful) to consider the Constitutions of Great Britain and of Ireland like these two ladies. Those who do not see defects in Great Britain, let them look at her sister, and then will they see what the carpers at the beauty have

often endeavoured to expose. I know it is now, and has ever since the year 1782, been considered as an imprudent thing in a Member of the Parliament of Great Britain to say any thing of the Constitution of Ireland. I never subscribed to that doctrine. It seemed to me to be indiscreet to subscribe to it at any time; but to subscribe to it at the moment when we are voting such large armaments, for the purposes, if Ministers themselves can be credited, of defending Ireland against an invasion, would be the extreme of folly and wickedness. As a Member of the Parliament of Great Britain, discussing the interests of the British dominions, in which I include all the affairs of which our Government has the care, I should consider myself as neglecting the duty imposed upon me, and deserting my trust, if I did not advert to every thing on which the welfare of this State depends; if I did not take notice of those parts of the King's dominions which are strong, and those which are weak, and therefore it is that I have referred both to Great Britain and to Ireland. I have observed in the last speech of the Lord Lieutenant of the Sister Kingdom, there is not expressed the same apprehension of an invasion as was communicated from the Throne to the Parliament of Great Britain. Here it becomes necessary for me to take notice of the communication from the Throne to us. [Mr. Fox desired the paragraph in the King's Speech which related to an invasion to be read.] "It cannot be doubted what would be the issue of such an enterprise." Why not doubt it? Partly from the strength of our navy; but also because, although we have heard of plots, treasons, conspiracies and jacobins, the opinion of His Majesty (his own real, his sanguine opinion, and a well-founded one I believe it to be, however the rest of his speech may be the work of his Minister) is, and it is mine also, that if there be any who are real enemies to our Constitution, they are too contemptible in number and in power to be noticed. Why are we not quite so well satisfied with regard to the security of Ireland? because we know the Irish have not the same Constitution in substance as we have. If they had, what could lead us to think more meanly of our brethren than of ourselves? Are they not equal to us in zeal? Are they not equal to us in courage? Are they not as able as well as willing to repel invasion? Have they not given instances of all those noble qualities which we prize so highly in ourselves? If, therefore, there can be any distrust of their attachment to Government, it must be owing to the practical difference between their Constitution and ours. If there be that difference, I have shewn the cause of it, and I have suggested the remedy. I trust that remedy will be applied ere it be too late, and I believe it is not yet too late. All I can say is, that

I shall have the consolation of having done my duty. If Ministers neglect theirs, the Public will judge who are the authors of the evil, if, unhappily for us all, it should overwhelm us. I have thought it necessary to make these observations on the state of Ireland, because I could not conceive that the Minister was not serious when he stated there was danger of invasion, not only of this island but also of another part of His Majesty's European possessions not less important to us. That was a sentence I applauded, because I understood it to refer to Ireland, as indeed it could have no other reference, since Corsica is no longer subject to the British Crown.

The Honourable DUDLEY RYDER said, that he little expected to have heard on this evening, when the country was in such a crisis, the collection of inflammatory matter which the right honourable gentleman who spoke last had contrived to introduce in the course of his speech. He little expected that he would have held out such a number of encouraging motives to the enemy, when they might be meditating an invasion upon the sister kingdom. He little expected to have heard from him that the subjects of that kingdom were of no more consideration in the eyes of Government than the oxen and sheep which they possessed, and that such radical reforms were necessary, just after those most important and most loudly called for had been granted. In short, he little expected to hear from a Member of a British House of Commons such a speech as might have composed a Manifesto for a French General after invading the country of Ireland. As this was matter which in his opinion it was extremely improper to introduce, he considered it as unworthy of any reply. From the speech of that right honourable gentleman on this evening, compared with his speeches on former evenings, however, he deduced one inference, that the opponents of Ministers often made use of arguments, founded upon extreme cases, for the sake of making a temporary impression, which they afterwards thought fit to abandon. When the alarm of an invasion was first communicated to Parliament, information was demanded respecting the grounds of alarm; it was afterwards confessed that it was impossible to expect any detailed information upon the subject; and now when measures were proposed to avert the threatened calamity, these measures were arraigned as having a tendency to destroy the liberties of the people, and to subvert the constitution of the country. These sort of arguments to which he and those who sat with him in the former Parliament were by no means unaccustomed, he had been in the use of considering as mere figures of speech, and he certainly, on the present occasion, should not attempt to answer them. An honourable gentleman (General Tarleton) who opened the debate, had had re-

coarse to historical facts. He approved much of a respectful attachment to the practices of our ancestors, and was glad when any gentleman on the other side was inclined to consult that authority. He, however, collected from the history of this country a series of facts very different to those cited by the right honourable gentleman who preceded him. In the year 1743-4, in which case it was said that Parliament proceeded on such minutiae of detail relative to the projected invasion, in that case, he said, the only information given was from the Captain of a Packet-boat, who made affidavit that there were thirty or forty vessels at Calais prepared for the purpose of taking in troops. How then, on a comparison, did the present case stand with that instance? We had had now the imminent danger of invasion announced from the Throne, and supported by the private declaration of its Ministers. In 1745, when there was a rumour of some French troops having landed in Scotland, the King, in a message to his Parliament, informed them that he had ordered 6000 Hessians to be imported into the kingdom, and Parliament, in the address which they voted upon the message, thanked His Majesty for his paternal care of his people, and the step which he had taken to ensure the stability of his government. In 1756, His Majesty in his speech from the Throne, merely upon some advices which he had received from persons upon whom he could rely, that preparations were making for an invasion, notified that he had made a requisition of Hessian troops, and then, though parties ran as high as perhaps at any time in the history of the country, no question was asked respecting the authority of the information. Nay more, a right honourable gentleman (Lord Holland) whose memory had every claim upon the respect of the right honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Fox), and who was then Secretary of State, in six days after the speech was delivered from the Throne, brought down a message from His Majesty signifying his intention of introducing 12 Hanoverian battalions into the kingdom—a step which was then approved of by Parliament, though it was a step much more inconsistent with the principles of the Constitution than the measures which were now proposed to be adopted upon much better grounds. There appeared to him a fundamental error in the apprehension of the right honourable gentleman who spoke last. He seemed to think that there was no possible medium between calling out a body of cavalry by the zeal and spontaneous efforts of the people when the enemy are landed, and of making them previously completely disciplined. On the contrary, he said, the principal merit of the plan is this, that it did steer between these two extremes, and at a very small expence and inconvenience afforded the ready means of a very considerable military

force. It collected this body, and enabled the country, in the time of need, to know where to look for them, without any degree of general tumult or alarm. The expence, compared to the utility, would be extremely trivial. Some gentlemen had estimated it at 3,000,000*l.* but this was extravagant, and beyond all bounds: they might as well have called it 30,000,000*l.* He could not perceive how the present armament could operate to the subversion of the Constitution: on the contrary, if there was a plot formed against the liberties of the country, as was alledged, arming the People seemed the most likely mode of counteracting it. They were only to be called out for a few days—a period in which they could not be supposed to contract the habits of soldiers, or to be inured to military discipline. With respect to the exertions of which these men would be capable in a moment of danger; they certainly would not be so effectual as the country rising in a mass; but still the convenience of having such a body of men in readiness would be very considerable. The infantry would be trained, the men would be provided with arms, and the horses would be pronounced fit for service, circumstances of preparation which could be best estimated by the experience of the disadvantages which would arise from neglecting to take these prudent and necessary steps. In case this force should not, at the period of emergency, be thought sufficient, it did in no degree supersede the general exertions and zeal of the people, but, on the contrary, prepared and facilitated them. The present inconvenience of the measure had been complained of, but in a way which was, to his mind, wholly unsatisfactory and exaggerated; and compared to the effect it would produce, he was sure that it would be found small, and what the people would cheerfully submit to. This was his sincere opinion of the measure; though, like all others of the present Administration, some gentlemen would be found to attack it as a breach of the Constitution, and a departure from the wise policy and venerable example of our ancestors.

Mr. WILBERFORCE was unwilling to enter into any discussion on the subject; but lest it should be supposed he was indifferent to the state of the country, he felt himself irresistibly called on to say a few words. He had listened with great pain and concern to the speech of the right honourable gentleman, delivered at a time when unanimity was too essentially necessary for the security of the country. It had been acknowledged on all sides, that if the country were actually in danger of invasion, every man must unite in its defence; and in this sentiment the right honourable gentleman had already concurred this session; but it was with the utmost surprise and regret that he found this unanimity was to have so short an ex-

istence. The King's Ministers stated the danger of the country some time ago, and they have again stated that every subsequent account gives them more and more reason to apprehend that an invasion is actually meditated. But at this season of danger, a danger of which the honourable gentlemen themselves were sensible, their object seemed to be to weaken the hands of Government, and to cripple the exertions of the Executive Power. On the present night in particular he much deplored the exercise which the right honourable gentleman had made of his talents in delivering a speech, which, if there was any danger before, rendered it still more imminent and pressing; for if its contents went abroad, there was no calculating the bad effects which it might produce. He did not impute to the right honourable gentleman or his friends any wish for an invasion, but neither would he compliment them upon their principles; on the contrary, he believed that they would not be displeased at any small mischief befalling the country, if they could take advantage of it to get Ministers turned out of office. For to what did their arguments go? Had they not stated their continuance in power as the greatest possible calamity to which the country could be subjected? Had they not stated the Constitution as ruined by their measures, ruined almost as often as there had been bills passed for defending it? When men were in the practice of indulging such arguments, there was no saying where they would end. He would speak his opinion fairly. That the measures now proposed would be attended with considerable expence he believed. But he believed also that that was inconsiderable when compared with the probable advantages with which their execution would be attended, and that the nation would be willing to come forward in a body, and cheerfully subscribe to them as the means of securing every thing that is valuable and dear to them. He loved the Constitution, but he confessed that he should love it less if it wanted that energy in times of difficulty and danger that it now possessed. When the honourable gentleman therefore attacked the Executive Government at such a period, he tended to weaken its energy, and, by diminishing its strength, to alienate the affections of the people from the source of their protection, and the spring of their exertions. He sat down with again stating that he felt himself impelled by an invincible impression to make these few remarks, and begged pardon of the House for having trespassed upon their attention so long.

Mr. SHERIDAN reprobated the attack that had just been made on his right honourable friend. The honourable gentleman said, he has concluded the most extraordinary and most unprovoked libel I ever heard in this House, by protesting that he had felt himself

invincibly called upon to utter every word that he had said. Whence or of what nature, whether political or fanatical, are the calls which so invincibly govern that honourable gentleman's conduct I neither regard nor inquire; but this I am sure of, that no part of his speech, no part of his fury, no part of his pathos, no part of his invective was called for by any one passage or sentiment in the speech of my right honourable friend. He says he has heard my right honourable friend's speech with surprise and regret. Sir, I have heard his with regret, but no surprise. I must regret at this crisis, when we hear so much of the necessity of temper, moderation, and a spirit of unanimity, to find that there are men on whom all those qualities, when evinced by their opponents, are lost and thrown away. I must regret to find that there are such men and such tempers: that with them forbearance begets irritation, candour is repaid by cant, and moderation encourages insult. I appeal to the House whether or not the honourable gentleman's speech justifies this observation. I appeal to them whether any part of my right honourable friend's speech can justify the manner in which it has been attacked. Mark the malice and the bitterness of the honourable gentleman's insinuations. He is graciously pleased to admit that he does not believe that we wish this country to be actually conquered by France. As one of the party to whom he has addressed himself, I bow with all possible gratitude for this instance of his candour; but, says he, their avowed hatred of the present Administration is such, that I believe they would not be displeased with that sort of invasion that might throw a degree of disgrace on the present Ministers. Good God! Sir, what motive does he assign us, and what object does he allot us! In contradiction to all our professions, in contradiction to all the manifestations of our actions, he boldly presumes that we are a set of selfish temporizing traitors, who without meaning to destroy, would wish the safety of the country to be endangered for the gratification of disgracing the present Ministers! of bringing, he says, a degree of disgrace upon them! Upon whom? Upon Ministers? Begrimed and black with infamy, defeated by their enemies, and degraded in the eyes of Europe already! we, it seems, wish an attack on our country for the purpose of bringing a degree of disgrace on those men, as if it were possible to aggravate the shame and indignity of the situation which they have brought on themselves: On the question of the Defence of the Country, we have abstained from reproaching them, and they repay us with insult. I, for one, expect no credit or applause from the partizans of these Ministers, for the line we have pursued since the first serious intimation of the dan-

ger of an invasion; but, desirous as we have ~~shown~~ ourselves, however distrustful of the Minister, to strengthen the Executive Government in case of emergency—let them not mistake our present forbearance—let them not misconstrue it as the slightest indication of a departure from a solemn resolution, to look to a day of National Justice on the authors of our present calamities, as the only hope of National Salvation. Our intermediate moderation they may treat as they please; but it is trying our patience high indeed to hear those Ministers, or their advocates arraigning us as factious traitors, if we dare to utter a sentiment that may bring a degree of disgrace on their characters. It is too much, Sir, that we should be insultingly accused of a crafty plot to disgrace men, whose want of vigour in every enterprize, and whose want of faith in every engagement, have made their administration at this moment the hope of their enemies, and the fear of their allies. It is too much that such men should arrogantly hold their heads up in this House, where I view them only as arraigned culprits, whose trial is put off. That they should presume that we are as insensible to the injuries they have inflicted, as their own hardened hearts are insensible of remorse; that they should come here with frontless inhumanity, confessing and boasting even that, now at last, they have expended blood and treasure sufficient to soothe their pride, and palliate the concession of their adopting the advice of my right honourable friend, which, if originally adopted, would have saved every one of those lives, and every guinea of that treasure. It is too much to see such men covered equally with crime and shame, besmeared at once with blood and mire, erect their crests, and boldly demand support from the country, because they have endangered it, and attempt to proscribe as factious traitors, those who have fruitlessly endeavoured to save it.

But, Sir, the honourable gentleman has accounted for the animated, I will not call it the rancorous, manner in which he has spoken, by asserting that my right honourable friend's speech displayed, at a time when moderation is so desirable, the greatest degree of party animosity. On this charge I confidently appeal to all who sit near the honourable gentleman. A speech of more temperate counsel, both in matter and manner, was never heard in this House. Where was the party animosity? Yet let me retract: I guess the animosity which the honourable gentleman attributes to such counsel. My right honourable friend's advice was to change the whole system of the Irish Government; to govern there as he would govern here, on the principles of equal justice, truth, and plain-dealing. This is the counsel given by my right honourable friend: this is the aggression of his speech. The honourable gentleman is right to resent it as a

friended to the present Minister. He is right in considering any advice that tends to take him from the profitable path in which he has trod as the insidious counsel of party animosity. In corruption he has walked—in corruption he has thriven. However calamitous his career to his country and the people, nothing can have been more profitable to himself and his connections. The advice, therefore, that would tempt such a Minister to return to the straight paths of truth and honour, may, for ought I know, be plausibly imputed to party animosity. This is the only ground on which I can account for what would otherwise appear a spurt of malice without a meaning. Mr. Sheridan adverted to Mr. Ryder's accusation of Mr. Fox for using inflammatory arguments with respect to Ireland, while he at the same time pleaded the danger of answering them. The honourable gentleman had represented the speech of his right honourable friend as containing matter for the manifesto of an invading General. This was at least a confession that the facts he alledged were true, since a General, on invading a country, would never enumerate to the inhabitants grievances which he knew did not exist, else he might be sure that his manifesto would be treated with contempt. The best way of preventing a French General from putting inflammatory topics in his manifesto, would be to remove all cause of discontent. It could not be denied that those inflammatory topics, as they were called, were true. It would have been better to have shewn Mr. Fox's assertions to be false, than to have traduced him for making them. Mr. Sheridan warned the Minister of the dangerous conclusion he seemed inclined to countenance, that there was no discontent where there was do clamour. "There were those who felt and were silent, and those who felt so were most to be feared." Mr. Sheridan concluded with a short review of the bill, and though he was thankful for amendments, which he understood were to be adopted from some suggestions of his, yet he still considered it, "if meant as a measure of force, weak and inefficient; if as a measure of revenue, partial and oppressive." He considered it as extremely objectionable, both in its principles and provisions; and he could not but remark, that it had been carried through all its stages by the Finance Minister, in the presence of the War Minister, to whose department it certainly belonged, but who had sat as dumb a spectator of its progress as if he had nothing to do with it.

Lord STANLEY said, he could not in his conscience justify himself as discharging his duty to his constituents, if he suffered the present measure to pass without publicly disapproving it. Like too many others that have lately been agreed to, it increased the influ-

ence of the Crown, which had already acquired too much strength. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) had much more reason to be alarmed at the growing influence of the Crown, than at any foreign invasion, which his Lordship did not believe there was any cause to fear. When actual danger appeared, then he would arm as readily as any man, but till there was some appearance of danger, he could not consent to a measure like the present. The tendency of the conduct of Ministers, his Lordship said, was to terrify the people of this country with imaginary plots and dangers, in order to increase their own influence; though the question, in fact, was not whether we should defend ourselves, or sister kingdom, more effectually, but whether the Minister should be more securely seated in his place.

Mr. NICHOLS approved of some increase of the public force, in the present juncture, but condemned this mode of doing it; proposing to be a tax on luxury, it was partial and vexatious. Those who keep horses were already taxed, and therefore had in some degree bought their right to use that indulgence, for which now they were called on again to pay an enormous sum. It was in his mind a species of requisition, and from its resemblance to that part of French resources he condemned it. This country was not reduced to such extremities, and should avoid them as long as possible. We had at present, both credit and money; but if we ever should resort to levy in kind, it should be done on fair and equitable principles, extending equally to all classes. In case of invasion, he held that His Majesty had a right to call on all his subjects, and so likewise in case of any necessity. On this principle alone was the practice of pressing seamen for the navy justified. But though the Crown had a right in such cases to a personal requisition, the present measure went farther, and put not only their persons, but also their property in such a state. He thought another plan might be brought forward, in case any additional exertion of the national strength was necessary, which would be less burdensome to the people, and also afford a more efficient strength to the country. By the present bill, a great many new offences would be created, as well as much additional trouble incurred in enforcing it.

Mr. STURT declared, that he considered what had fallen from the honourable gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) as an insult to the side of the House on which he sat, when they had been told that they were less anxious to repel an invasion than to change the Administration. It was unworthy of any liberal man to accuse gentlemen who opposed the measures of Administration with being disloyal and disaffected. With regard to the enemy, he thought from the situ-

ation of their harbours, and the number of their men of war in Brest, as well as transport vessels, &c. that their force was considerable enough to attempt an invasion of this country or Ireland. The Eastern coast he considered as in most danger if the enemy made three different attacks (which, Mr. Sturt said, he had no doubt but they would do.) For his own part, he believed there was only one safe way of avoiding an invasion, and that was by giving relief to the poor, who were now starving.

Mr. JEFFERY said, that as sufficient assurances had been given by Ministers that an invasion was threatened, he hoped every gentleman would join heart with hand to prevent the designs of the enemy, and, for this purpose, give their concurrence to the measure now proposed for strengthening the internal force of the country.

Sir JAMES PULTENEY likewise highly approved of the bill, but as an amendment, could wish the Cavalry, like the New Militia, previously exercised to their being called out. This, he conceived, might be done in small bodies one day in the week, without much inconvenience or trouble, though General Tarleton seemed to trust implicitly to the protection of the navy. Mr. Fox seemed not to rely so confidently on the protection of that force, as he feared the greatest danger in Ireland where the navy would have a better opportunity of acting. Like the honourable gentleman who spoke last, he looked on the event of an invasion as practicable as well as intended; notwithstanding the utmost exertion of our navy. A landing was certainly possible by waiting for favourable opportunities. It was difficult to say whether the navy was most to be admired for skill or courage; but with so small a distance of coast, some occasion must occur, enabling the enemy to elude their vigilance. The defeats of the French in Germany were not so great a security in his mind as many thought them. While they were successful, they had in that quarter a great object, and all their force was directed there. Now that their armies were driven home, their proximity to us was greater, and in the general inactivity of the winter on the continent they might be naturally induced to employ their force against us. If they once landed, though ultimately defeated, they would do much mischief if they were only opposed by a force nearly equal, our preparation should therefore give us a great superiority. An army too, he observed, might force its way, if any thing equal in strength, although in an enemy's country, as that of General Moreau had done in Germany. The Dutch, as well as the French, he considered as capable of making considerable detachments of troops; and therefore, as there was no absolute security against an invasion of the enemy, he wished the

passing of this bill, which was calculated to avert the threatened mischief.

Mr. A. STEWART regretted that any part of the evening's debate should tend to irritate the minds of the inhabitants of this country. He could wish the allusion to the state of things in Ireland to have been omitted. The passing of this bill could not unite the inhabitants of that kingdom, if they were disunited; at the same time, it might be one reason for this country's raising a great efficient power, to be able to afford the readier assistance to the sister kingdom in case of an attack upon it. As His Majesty's Ministers had declared that the enemy actually entertained a design of attempting to land somewhere, he thought no one could hesitate a moment on the propriety of raising a force sufficient to repel them. He, for one, was induced to give confidence to Administration; he did not mean a blind and servile confidence, but one consisting in a liberal interpretation of their motives, a reverence for their great talents and abilities, and a persuasion that these abilities would be directed to the country's good. The efforts of Ministers for this purpose ought to be encouraged by a well-timed confidence, rather than enfeebled by an unqualified opposition.

Sir RICHARD HILL declared, that, in his opinion, the country's representatives could not do otherwise than concur in measures, connected with which every thing dear to Englishmen were at stake. As the Executive Government have, as in duty bound, informed Parliament of the hostile design of the enemy, and submitted measures for the country's defence, Sir Richard asked, whether the country might not justly think that its representatives had not done their duty if they rejected measures which were proposed to them, and which tended to avert those impending dangers with which the country was threatened?

Sir RICHARD CARR GLYN said, that knowing the candour of the House, he should not hesitate to exercise his right of speaking on the question—the bill immediately under the consideration of the House, appeared to him to be wise and practicable; practicable, because he had often witnessed the attachment of the people to the Government; and wise, because it was a necessary measure; for he could not forget that he had lately heard from the Throne that the enemy meditated an intention of invading the country. That the Ministers of the Crown, responsible as they were to the nation and to that House, had strongly recommended the augmentation of the internal force of the country, and had submitted the bill before the House, and other bills which appeared to him to be efficient for the end proposed. He humbly conceived that the

House, the guardians as they were of the kingdom, the representatives of the people, and the protectors of their property, could not do otherwise than concur in measures which have for their object the defence of every thing dear to the people, their property, the national establishments, and the very existence of the country, as a free and independent nation. He then supposed, for a moment, that the House were not to concur in the measures and bills, and an invasion was to follow; what then, he said, would the people of the country say? Would they not exclaim, that the Executive Power had done its duty, by informing Parliament, that the enemy manifest intentions of an invasion—that the Ministers of the Crown had done their duty, by recommending measures of defence; but what, in such an emergency, would they say of their representatives? That they had not done their duty in rejecting measures and precautions which would have precluded every attempt to invade us, and have averted those evils and those calamities which a rich commercial and manufacturing nation must endure, if she is so supine and absurd as not to make every preparation in her power to repel the foe.

Mr. Chancellor PITT observed, that he would propose some clauses when the report was brought up, respecting those who had left off keeping horses after the period of their assessment. He had considered an observation made by an honourable Member on the preceding night, concerning the hardships those persons might fall under, who had kept but one horse, and who being reduced in their circumstances, should no longer keep it, if they were liable to the present bill; it was his intention, therefore, to make a provision for cases of that kind.

The House divided, Ayes, 140; Noes, 30.—Majority 110.

The report being brought up, and several clauses added, the bill, with the amendments, was ordered to be engrossed, and read a third time to-morrow, if then engrossed.

Mr. Chancellor PITT brought in a bill for enabling His Majesty to require the personal service of a body of men of the description therein mentioned, which was read a first time.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, he took it for granted, that the bill just brought in was called the Gamekeepers' bill. He trusted the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not press the second reading of it that night. He said, he objected wholly to the principle of the bill, as being one totally unknown to the Constitution of the country, and of the most dangerous tendency. He particularly wished country gentlemen to have an opportunity of looking into it;

for his part, he should, in the strongest manner, oppose it, and should take the sense of the House upon it.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, it would be no ways inconvenient to him to defer the second reading till to-morrow. It was a very short bill, and would not take up any length of time. He wished gentlemen to consider it with attention. If they took the trouble of reading it, they would be soon satisfied it did not merit their disapprobation or censure.

The bill was ordered to be printed, and read a second time to-morrow.

Thursday, 3d November.

It was moved in a Committee on the Corn bill, that it should be part of the instructions of the said Committee to approve of a clause, allowing damaged wheat to be employed in distilleries for low wines, and in making starch and blue. The clause was agreed to by the House, and ordered to be engrossed.

A motion was made and seconded, that there be laid before the House, such a number of copies of the account of the additional charge to be added to the national debt, in consequence of the interest of the loans made subsequent to the 27th George III.

The SPEAKER informed the House, that Thomas Bailey Howell, who had petitioned against the return for the Borough of Cirencester, had neglected to enter into a proper recognizance. The order therefore for the taking his petition into consideration was discharged.

The following are the gentlemen appointed to try the merits of the petition presented against the return for the Borough of Camelford.

Sir Henry St. John Mildmay, Chairman.

William Adams, Esq.

Sir John Wodehouse

T. T. Metcalfe

R. Everett

Hon. Robert Curzon

Hon. George Villiers

John Petrie, Esq.

William Baldwin, Esq.

J. W. Gerrard

W. Lygon

Hon. Robert Fulk Greville

Right Hon. C. James Fox

Lord Hawkesbury

} Nominees.

The Cavalry bill was brought up, and read a third time. Several new clauses were added.

Mr. BIDDULPH, after observing that he conceived the bill to be a kind of requisition bill, and not of revenue, and that therefore where proper persons were not to be found to perform service, that it should be incumbent on the Deputy Receivers General to provide

men in their stead. He said he should move a clause upon the subject.

Mr. Chancellor PITT did not think the honourable gentleman's observations practicable, as he did not know the Receiver General would be in possession of the necessary funds for providing men; besides, he conceived it would be too much for the Receiver General to have that trouble cast upon him, and he wished therefore that the honourable gentleman would give up his intended motion.

He then moved, that the order of the day for a call of the House should be deferred till Thursday the 24th of November.

Mr. SHERIDAN wished to know, whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer meant that there should be a real and effectual call of the House; if he did not, there could be no reason for the call hanging over the heads of gentlemen. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer intended the call for any purpose of importance, he ought to declare so.

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied, that he meant the call to be effectual on the day he had mentioned.

Mr. FOX said, it was usual when gentlemen moved for a call of the House, to state their reasons. It had, perhaps, with respect to the first call of the House, been stated, that it was in order to enforce the attendance of a sufficient number of persons to ballot for election petitions. And it might be supposed it was continued for the same reason. He wished the Ministers to state, whether the call was meant for some important public business, or merely for a ballot.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he thought it right to enforce an attendance, on account of the ballots for election petitions, and he wished to extend it to the time he had mentioned, because he thought about that time there would probably be some very important public business. It was his intention to bring forward about that time the subject of Ways and Means.

Mr. FOX pressed the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say, in positive terms, whether it would be absolutely necessary for Members to be in readiness at that time.

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied, that on Wednesday the 23d instant, he intended to bring forward the subject of Ways and Means, and he wished to have as many gentlemen as possible in the House.

The call of the House was accordingly appointed for Thursday the 24th of November.

The order of the day for the second reading of the act relative to gamekeepers being read,

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that doubts had been entertained with regard to this measure, and as the gamekeepers, if enrolled, were not intended to be trained, there was no particular reason for pressing the measure forward. He therefore proposed the discussion should be postponed until after the recess. He then moved, "That instead of reading the bill now, it be read on the 25th of November."

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that if he agreed to this motion, it must be from a conviction that the Minister would never think of this bill again. If he did not think that the Minister had been better advised upon this subject than he was when he brought it forward, and that the House should hear no more of it, he should have moved that this bill be read this day nine months. If the Minister would be frank upon the subject, and confess his error upon the matter, he would say nothing upon it—else he should make his motion now. The House had lately heard a good deal about recognizances. If the right honourable gentleman would enter into a recognizance that the House should hear no more of the subject, he should be satisfied; otherwise he must proceed to shew that the bill was a stigma on the good sense of the House and the Nation; a bill of such pernicious and foul principles, that he was confident he should persuade the House, if not the Minister, to reject it with indignation. He had too much esteem for the good sense of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to believe that he was the author of such a bill; somebody must have put into his hand, in the form of a bill, a bad translation of a German romance.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he was too much accustomed to hard epithets, as applied to him, to be easily provoked into a debate, upon a subject which did not require it, and therefore he should not take notice of the remarks which were made upon this bill by the honourable gentleman. All the recognizance he should enter into was, that he should, before the 25th of November, give the honourable gentleman notice what he intended to propose with regard to this bill.

The House adjourned.

Friday, 4th November.

The SPEAKER informed the House, that the Electors of the Borough of Tregnoy had not entered into the recognizance required by law in consequence of the Petition presented on their behalf, complaining of an undue election for that Borough.

Order upon that Petition discharged.

Upon the same ground the orders were also discharged relative

to the petitions for the Borough of Cirencester, and for the City of Worcester, in which last case Edmund Lechmere, jun. was the Petitioner.

Mr. THOMAS GRENVILLE, Chairman of the Committee, balloted to try the election for the Borough of Southwark, stated, that Alexander Morris had disobeyed the summons of that Committee; and therefore he moved, by the direction of such Committee, "That the said Alexander Morris be taken into the custody of the Serjeant at Arms attending that House."

The SPEAKER said the House would understand that the Act of the 10th of the King gave power to a Committee to report to the House circumstances of witnesses either disobeying the summons of the Committee, giving false evidence, or prevaricating. By the 28th of the King the Committee were empowered to act for themselves, without motion to the House, if any witness disobeyed their summons, gave false evidence, or prevaricated. The Committee had made choice, in the present instance, of the provisions of the former Act, in which they were not irregular, as they might make choice of either, the provisions of the two Acts not being repugnant to each other. To shew this, he desired the clerk to read the clauses of the two Acts relating to this case.

The motion was then put, that Alexander Morris be taken into the custody of the Serjeant at Arms.—Ordered.

Mr. COURTENAY moved that an account of the outstanding ordnance debentures, stating the sums for which they were issued, be laid before the House. Ordered.

The report of the Army and Navy Augmentation bill for Scotland was brought up and read.

Mr. FRASER wished that some principle of proportion should be adopted, and that the bill should fall fairly on the respective counties. The quotas bore no proportion to the land tax, and the population of the country. The calculations had been collected from the statements of Mr. Webster in 1755; since that time, however, a great alteration had occurred. Sir John Sinclair had published statistical accounts of nine-tenths of the parishes in Scotland, and from those it appeared, that the general population of that kingdom had increased 300,000. Some counties, it was true, had been stationary in their population; a few had decreased; but the general population had increased 300,000. The quotas, therefore, ought to have been discriminative, and to have been regulated by the population of the different parishes. That the principle of population was a fair one he acknowledged, because the principle of the bill was to procure men. But there was another

point he had particularly to press. It related to the highlanders, a brave, hardy, and serviceable race, who were much attached to their chiefs, and would not be happy in being compelled to serve under other commanders. They were a set of men whose language and manners were peculiar, and would be more useful in case of necessity by being kept together, than by being mixed with other forces, whose language they did not speak, and with whose manners they were unacquainted. He wished, therefore, that a provision might be made for permitting them to serve under their particular chieftains.

The LORD ADVOCATE said, that what he collected from the speech of the honourable gentleman who spoke last, was, that in some parishes the quotas would operate more partially than in others; such an operation it was not possible in all cases to provide against. With respect to the highlanders, he believed that they would be permitted to enrol themselves under such of their chieftains as they liked.

After a few words of explanation from Mr. Fraser, the bill was ordered to be engrossed, and read a third time on Monday.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he had given notice yesterday of his intention to open the budget on the 23d of November. As several gentlemen, however, might be absent in the country upon the important business of the bills, he had thought it most advisable to defer opening the budget to the 25th of November.

The Committee of Supply was fixed for the 23d of November, and the Committee of Ways and Means for the 25th.

The order of the day for resuming the adjourned debate upon the Cavalry bill, was read.

A fresh clause, on the motion of Mr. Chancellor PITT, was added to the bill, by way of rider.

Mr. SHERIDAN observed, that as the right honourable gentleman was suggesting amendments to the bill, it would not be useless to inquire what was to guide the discretion of those Magistrates who were to form the different classes. The power entrusted to them would be very great, and they might so manage particular classes as to select any one person they pleased out of ten. He submitted the propriety and fairness of making the elections by ballot.

Mr. Chancellor PITT expressed a reliance on the integrity of the Magistrates in general. If any inconvenience should be felt, it might soon be removed, since there was a provision in the bill, whereby the Legislature might alter it in the present session, if an alteration should appear necessary.

Mr. SHERIDAN remarked, that the remedy would be too late—the grievance would have been previously incurred. He did not mean to throw any imputation upon the magistrates in general, although some, who were more immediately in the appointment, and under the direction of Government, were, he confessed, objects of his suspicion. It was just probable that a man might render himself objectionable, and not so tractable as might be wished. It would not be impossible to select that man. But why was the mode of ballot objected to? If it were an improper mode, there might as well be no ballot for the militia.

The several amendments having been gone through, the question for passing the bill was put and carried.

At the conclusion of this day's debate, a singular incident occurred: a stranger rose up in the front of the gallery, and called out "Treason, treason!" he held a paper in his hand. The Speaker immediately ordered him to be taken into custody, and the Serjeant at Arms to clear the gallery. The gallery was cleared, and the stranger taken into custody, but discovered such evident marks of derangement, that he was immediately dismissed. After his first violent outcry of treason, he uttered some incoherent expressions to those around him, "That he would disclose treason at the bar of the House." He shewed no other symptoms of insanity, except what appeared in his expressions. He made no attempt to resist those who took him into custody, and when suffered to depart, went off quietly.

Monday, 7th November.

Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL brought up a report from the Committee appointed to try the merits of the election for the Borough of Southwark, stating that the Committee had this morning received a letter from Mr. Thomas Grenville, their Chairman, intimating that, on account of the death of a near relation, it would be impossible for him to attend their meetings.

Upon the motion of Sir Edward Knatchbull, the House sustained the excuse, agreeably to a precedent in 1791.

Sir JOHN ROUS BROUGHTON brought up the report of the Committee appointed to try the merits of the election for the Borough of Malmesbury, which confirm the election and return, but stating the petitions to have been neither frivolous nor vexatious.

Mr. JOHN SMYTH from the Select Committee, who were appointed to try and determine the merits of the petition of John George Philipps, esq. complaining of an undue election and return for the

county of the borough of Carmarthen, informed the House, That the said Select Committee have determined,

That Majens Dorriest Majens, Esq. is not duly elected a burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the said county of the borough of Carmarthen :

And that John George Philipps, Esq. the petitioner, ought to have been returned a burgess to serve in this present Parliament for the said county of the borough of Carmarthen :

And that the said John George Philipps, Esq. is duly elected a burgess to serve in this present Parliament, for the said county of the borough of Carmarthen.

Tuesday, 8th November.

A message was received from the Lords, announcing that their Lordships had agreed to the Militia Augmentation bill.

Wednesday, 9th November.

The bill for funding the Navy Debt was read a third time and passed.

Thursday, 10th November.

Mr. Baldwin, from the Select Committee, who were appointed to try and determine the merits of the petition of the honourable Augustus Ludlow, commonly called Lord Preston, of the kingdom of Ireland, and Robert Adair, Esq. ; and also, the petition of the there under-signed inhabitants of the borough of Camelford, in the county of Cornwall, paying scot and lot, severally complaining of an undue election and return for the said borough, informed the House,

That it appeared to the said Select Committee, that the merits of the said several petitions did in part depend upon the right of election ; and that thereupon the said Committee required the counsel for the several parties to deliver, to the clerk of the said Committee, statements, in writing, of the right of election for which they respectively contended ;

That, in consequence thereof, the counsel for the said several petitioners delivered in a statement as follows :

“ That the right of election is in freemen, and also inhabitants paying scot and lot, in the borough of Camelford, in the county of Cornwall.”

That the counsel for the sitting Members, William Joseph Dennison, Esq. and John Angerstein, Esq. delivered in a statement as follows :

“ The sitting Members contend the right of election for the borough of Camelford is in the mayor, capital burgesſes, and free-men, of the ſaid borough.”

That, upon the ſtatement delivered in by the counſel for the ſaid ſeveral petitioners, the ſaid Select Committee have determined,

That the right of election, as ſet forth in the ſaid ſtatement, is not the right of election for the ſaid borough of Camelford :

That, upon the ſtatement delivered in by the counſel for the ſitting Members, the ſaid Select Committee have determined,

That the right of election, as ſet forth in the ſaid ſtatement, is not the right of election for the ſaid borough of Camelford.

That the ſaid Select Committee, having duly conſidered the ſaid ſtatements, and the evidence adduced before them touching the right of election for the ſaid borough of Camelford, have determined,

That the right of election for Members to ſerve in Parliament for the borough of Camelford is in the freemen, being inhabitants, and paying ſcot and lot.

That the capital burgesſes of the ſaid borough have no right to vote for Members to ſerve in Parliament for that borough, unleſs they be free burgesſes inhabiting and paying ſcot and lot.

That William Joſeph Denniſon, Eſq. is duly elected a burgeſs to ſerve in this preſent Parliament for the borough of Camelford, in the county of Cornwall :

And alſo, that John Angerſtein, Eſq. is duly elected a burgeſs to ſerve in this preſent Parliament for the ſaid borough of Camelford.

Friday, 11th November.

Upon the motion of Mr. Chancellor-PITT, the different orders of the day, as they ſtood in the book, were poſtponed, and new orders appointed.

A meſſage from the Lords informed the Houſe their Lordſhips had agreed to the bill for funding the Navy Debt, without any amendment.

Saturday, 12th November.

A meſſage was received from the Lords, ſummoning the attendance of the Commons to attend in their Lordſhips' Houſe, to witneſs the Royal Aſſent to the bill for funding the Navy Debt ; and the Speaker being returned, he acquainted the Houſe, that he had been to the Houſe of Peers, where the Royal Aſſent had been given by Commiſſion to the ſaid bill.

Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL, from the Select Com-

mittee, who were appointed to try and determine the merits of the petition of George Tierney, complaining of an undue election and return for the Borough of Southwark, informed the House, that the said Select Committee have determined,

That George Woodford Thelluffon, Esq. is not duly elected a burghers to serve in this present Parliament for the said Borough of Southwark ;

And also, that the said Select Committee have determined,

That the last election for the said Borough of Southwark, so far as relates to the said George Woodford Thelluffon, Esq. is void.

And also, that the said Select Committee have determined,

That the petition of the said George Tierney did not appear to the said Select Committee to be frivolous or vexatious :

And also, that the said Select Committee have determined,

That the opposition of the said George Woodford Thelluffon, Esq. to the said petition, did not appear to the said Select Committee to be frivolous or vexatious. ..

And the said determinations were ordered to be entered in the Journals of this House.

Ordered, That Mr. Speaker do issue his warrant to the clerk of the Crown, to make out a new writ for the electing of a burghers to serve in this present Parliament for the Borough of Southwark, in the county of Surrey, in the room of George Woodford Thelluffon, Esq. whose election for the said Borough has been determined to be void.

Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL also reported from the said Select Committee, that they had come to a resolution, which they had directed him to report to the House ; and he read the Report in his place, and afterwards delivered it in at the table, where the same was read, and the resolution of the Committee is as followeth, viz.

Resolved, That it appears to this Committee, that, at the last election for the Borough of Southwark, George Woodford Thelluffon, Esq. did act in violation of the statute of the 7th of William III. cap. 4. whereby he is incapacitated to serve in Parliament upon such election.

Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL said, the House would recollect, that Alexander Morris, a witness summoned to appear before the Committee, had been ordered to be taken into custody for disobeying that summons. That man had certainly never appeared before the Committee. He spoke not only in behalf of the petitioner, but he spoke in behalf of every Member of that House, who might be concerned in a similar business. He knew, however,

that no blame could be imputed to the Serjeant at Arms, who had done his duty. But he trusted, that when the witness alluded to should be brought to the bar of that House, such notice would be taken of his contempt as the justice of the case might demand.

The House adjourned.

Monday, 28th November.

The SPEAKER informed the House, that lists had been given in of persons to be balloted for composing the India judicatures under the act of the 26th of His Majesty.

A new writ was ordered for Bath in the room of Lord Viscount Weymouth, called up to the House of Peers.

Mr. GREY moved, That on or before the 8th day of February next, the frecholders of the county of Kent, who had petitioned against the return for that county, should, by themselves or their agents, give in lists of the persons whose votes had been objected to, with the heads of the objections, and that the sitting Member should deliver similar lists to the petitioners.

Sir W. GREY said, he had no objection to the motion, which was agreed to.

General TARLETON moved, That there be laid before the House accounts of the money coined during the years 1793, 1794, 1795, and 1796, distinguishing the amount of each year—Of the application of the sum of 2,500,000*l.* voted last session of Parliament—Of the Navy, Victualling, and Transport bills issued in the month of November, and up to the 31st of December—Of the Navy, Victualling, and Transport bills due or to become due between the 1st of January and the 31st of December, 1796, which were all agreed to, and the accounts ordered to be printed.

Mr. Chancellor PITT gave notice that he meant to postpone the opening of the Budget till this day se'nnight.

Tuesday, 29th November.

Mr. WHITBREAD presented a petition from George Tierney, Esq. complaining of an undue election and return for the borough of Southwark.

The principal points of the petition were—That George Woodford Thellusson, Esq. was rendered incapable of serving in Parliament for that borough by the decision of the Committee appointed to try the merits of the first election; That, at the last election, prize-fighters were employed on the part of Mr. Thellusson, to obstruct the poll; That Mr. Jones, the Marshal of the King's Bench prison, brought forward persons confined for debt to vote

for Mr. Thellusson, and that their votes were taken contrary to law ; and, lastly, That bribery was employed by Mr. Thellusson to bias the votes of the electors.

The petition being read,

Mr. GREY said that he understood there were some doubts entertained respecting the propriety of receiving the petition at this time ; for his own part he conceived it to be perfectly regular.

The SPEAKER said that it rested with the House to determine whether, as the certificate from the returning officer had not been delivered to the House, they would receive the petition, or whether they would be contented with the return which had been made to the office of the Crown, if such return was actually made ; and if it was not made, whether they would be satisfied with the knowledge they had of the election having taken place.

Mr. GREY professed not to know whether the return had been sent to the Crown Office; but if it was not, it was the fault of the Returning Officer. But though it was not, it could be no objection to receiving the petition, because if such an objection was sustained, it would be in the power of any candidate who had violated the laws of election, to prevent a petition being presented against him, by delaying to give in his certificate.

Mr. WHITBREAD said, there was certainly no impropriety in presenting the petition, and he hoped that an early day would be appointed for taking it into consideration. He desired that the resolution of the last Committee upon the Southwark election should be read, and likewise a resolution of the House against practising bribery at elections. The resolutions being read, Mr. Whitbread expressed a hope that the House would vindicate its own honour and dignity by taking particular notice of these resolutions, and the conduct of Mr. Thellusson in the Southwark election, and he intimated an intention of moving something to that effect. This he would defer till after the merits of this election were tried ; at the same time he hoped that the consideration of the petition would take place of others, that a decision might be passed as early as possible upon a subject of so much importance. He therefore moved, That the petition be taken into consideration on this day fortnight, meaning to follow up the decision of the Committee with some other motions.

The petition was ordered to be taken into consideration on Tuesday the 13th of December.

The Speaker announced, for the satisfaction of the House, that the return had been made at the Crown Office.

A new writ was ordered for the borough of Saltash, for the

election of a burgess to serve in Parliament, in the room of Edward Bearcroft, Esq. deceased.

Another writ was ordered for the borough of Winchelsea, in the room of Richard Barwell, Esq.

The call of the House was postponed till Tuesday next.

The following are the names of the gentlemen who are appointed to try the merits of the petition presented against the election for the borough of Leominster :

W. Praed, Esq. Chairman.

Hon. Capt. Berkeley	J. Osborne, Esq.
S. Yorke, Esq.	Sir J. D. King, Esq.
W. Mellish, Esq.	G. Chalmers, Esq.
W. M. Pitt, Esq.	O. Williams, Esq.
Sir D. Carnegie	G. N. Edwards, Esq.
G. W. R. Harcourt, Esq.	J. Blackburne, Esq.

D. P. Coke, and } Esqrs. Nominees.
W. Dundas }

The following gentlemen are appointed to try the merits of the election for Milbourne Port :

W. Dickinson, junr. Esq.	W. Tatton, Esq.
W. Drummond, Esq.	J. Leland, Esq.
E. Burrow, Esq.	G. Baillie, Esq.
Sir C. Bishop	F. Lloyd, Esq.
J. Jeffery, Esq.	C. Lefevre, Esq.
W. Clive, Esq.	Sir W. W. Wynne.
C. Wallop, Esq.	

W. Smith, Esq. and } Nominees.
Hon. John Elliot, }

Wednesday, 30th November.

Mr. MANNING presented a petition from a number of merchants of the City, setting forth the inconveniences arising from the inadequate accommodation for the increased shipping of the port of London, and praying that the House would take the premises into consideration, and afford such relief as they should think fit.

The petition was referred to a Committee, consisting of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Members for the city of London, for the county of Northumberland, and the Members for the maritime counties.

Sir WILLIAM YOUNG moved, That there be laid before the House, the Report of the Commissioners of the Customs, to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, relative to the different plans submitted to their consideration, for the accommodation of the shipping in the port of London.

Mr. Alderman ANDERSON seconded the motion, and said

he was happy that this Report was to be laid before the House, and he hoped it would be printed for the use of the Members. The city of London were aware of the inconveniencies felt from the inadequate accommodation for the increased shipping of the port, and had turned their attention to the subject, and with this Report in their eye, they had formed such plans for the improvement of the accommodation of the shipping, as, when brought forward, he hoped would meet with the approbation of the House.—Ordered.

Mr. ROSE moved, That an address should be presented to His Majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased to order to be laid before the House, accounts of all monies issued in consequence of addresses of the House of Commons, and not made good by Parliament.

Upon the motion of Mr. METCALF, the order for taking into consideration the petition presented by T. Burges, Esq. against the return for the borough of Bridport, was discharged.

The order of the day for the House to go into a Committee of Supply being moved,

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he should take this opportunity to give notice, that it was intended to move certain army estimates and extraordinaries of the navy, which had not yet been brought forward, in a Committee of Supply on Friday next.

The House went into a Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved, That it is the opinion of the Committee that the sum of 420,000*l.* of disposable overplus, remaining in the Exchequer, be applied towards making good the grants of this year, which was agreed to.

The House being resumed, the report was ordered to be received to-morrow.

Thursday, 1st December.

A new writ was ordered to be made out by the clerk of the Crown for the borough of Higham Ferrers, to elect a Burgess to serve in Parliament, in the room of Serjeant Adair, who had accepted the office of Chief Justice of Chester.

Friday, 2nd December.

The SPEAKER informed the House, that he had received a letter stating that Alexander Morris, against whom an order had been issued in consequence of his not appearing to give evidence upon the trial of the petition on the Southwark election, was now in custody of the Sergeant at Arms.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS moved that Alexander

Morris be detained in the custody of the Serjeant at Arms, and ordered to appear at the bar on Monday.—Ordered.

An account of the money coined from the year 1793 to 1796 inclusive, was brought up from the Mint, and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. COKE said he rose in pursuance of a notice he had given, to move for leave to bring in a bill. He should not enter into the details of the bill which he meant to propose, but when he stated that it regarded the administration of justice in this country, it would immediately be recognized by the House as of the utmost importance. The general purpose of the bill was to allow actions and indictments within limited jurisdictions to be tried in the county at large. Formerly in this country, when men were better than they are now, it was found perfectly consistent with the purposes of justice that people should be tried almost at their own doors; but now when circumstances are changed, when a cause is in a manner prejudged by the conversation which it excites in every ale-house in the neighbourhood of the person concerned in it, it was very difficult for a man to obtain a fair trial within the limited jurisdiction in which the offence was committed. The bill then was intended to leave at the option of the party, whether he should be tried within such limited jurisdiction, and to enable him if he thought proper to obtain his trial within the county at large. The grievance which the bill was intended to remedy had been long felt, and had been described from the highest authority in the country, the Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench, as a great inconvenience, and a hope was expressed, that ere long a bill would be brought into Parliament to remove it. There were two places, Hull and Poole, the corporations of which had the privilege of praying for a commission for the trial of offences within their jurisdiction; but as it was attended with expence, they seldom applied for it till the prisons were almost full; in consequence of which, very great inconveniencies were felt by persons whose trials were thus delayed. The bill was intended to enable persons in such a situation to apply for a Habeas Corpus to be removed to the county jail, and to take their trial before the county at large, if they thought fit. He said that he meant to except from the operation of the bill the city of London. Having thus far explained the general outline, he should now move for leave to bring in a bill for regulating the trials on certain actions and indictments that arise within certain limited jurisdictions and bodies corporate within this kingdom.

Mr. LEFEVRE seconded the motion. Leave was given, and Mr. Coke, Mr. Lefevre, the Attorney and Solicitor Generals, and

the gentlemen of the Long Robe, were appointed to prepare and bring in the same.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that as some farther time would be requisite for making out the different arrangements that were necessary, he meant to defer the budget, which was fixed for Monday, till Wednesday next.

Mr. FOX said, that he wished, and he dared say the right honourable gentleman wished also, that the House should have accurate accounts of the extent of the navy debt previous to any general consideration of the financial state of the country. He meant that the account of the money issued for the service of the navy should be made out down to the end of November. He was sensible it could not be sufficient for a general view of the subject. He did not know how such an account was to be moved, but he imagined the right honourable gentleman would be very ready to give the House the means of forming as accurate a judgement as possible of the state of the country.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that it was impossible to have an accurate account of the navy debt, as it was composed not merely of navy bills, but arrears, of which accounts were made up at particular times, and it would derange the whole business of the offices in which they were made up, should they at present be called upon to prepare these accounts. It was easy, however, to move for an account of the ready monies issued for the service of the navy, since the month of October, to the present time. In contemplation of the attention necessary to be given to the subject, in laying before the House the financial state of the country for the present year, he should converse with those best acquainted with the particular department, and move for such accounts as could be prepared, and which would tend to give a more perfect view of the subject.

Mr. FOX said, the account for November would be as accurate as the account for October; he did not imagine it would be correct; but as far as it went it would furnish the House with more complete means of information.

Mr. GREY said, he had intended to move for the account alluded to, but he should not now push it, as it was said that it could not conveniently be produced. He, however, had other accounts for which he now meant to move, an account of the ordnance debt not provided up to the 30th of November, 1796; of the old duty on foreign spirits, for three years, ending 10th October, 1794; and also for one year, ending 10th October, 1796; of the duty on beer, for three years, ending 10th October, 1794; and for one year, ending 10th October, 1796, which were agreed to.

The order of the day for the second reading of the Gamekeepers' bill being read,

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he did not mean to trouble the House farther with this bill at present; he should only add, that a clause might be introduced into some other bill during the present session, to exempt from the ballot for the supplementary militia, such gamekeepers as might chuse to enrol themselves voluntarily, with a power to call them out along with the militia of the district. He therefore moved, That the second reading of the bill be postponed till this day six months, which was agreed to.

The Order of the day for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of Supply being read, several army and navy estimates were referred to it; after which the House went into the Committee, Mr. Hobart in the chair.

The SECRETARY AT WAR said, that these estimates were so much matter of course, and so little different from those of last year, that he did not conceive that it was necessary for him to say any thing upon them, and he should content himself with moving the different resolutions meant to be founded upon them. He moved as the first resolution, That the sum of 70,000*l.* be granted for horse furniture, &c. for the year 1797.

General TARLETON said, that when the army estimates were first brought forward, he had remarked, that the articles which had been omitted would amount to 580,000*l.* but in justice to his own accuracy, he was bound now to observe that they amounted to 707,000*l.* In fact, it was not very remarkable that he had committed this inaccuracy, for in a war in which every part of the expence had exceeded the calculation, it was not extraordinary that he here found the real amount beyond his computation. From the estimates now on the table, it would appear that the expences of the army next year would be six millions. He understood, from common rumour, that it was still intended to persevere in the ruinous system of carrying on the war in the West Indies. He understood a new Governor, a person, indeed, of high character, was to be sent out to St. Domingo, and that enterprises which had cost so much treasure and so many lives, were yet to be carried on without any possibility of advantage to this country. He should only say a word or two about the design which general report likewise circulated, of a design to send an army to Portugal of ten or twelve thousand men. While Ministers had come forward, and with the alarm of invasion, stated the necessity of increasing the military force of the country, there certainly was some inconsistency in such a design. If such a force was sent out of the country, there

could be no reason for the extraordinary measures which were brought forward for our defence. The Gamekeepers' bill had been given up, and the Cavalry bill, which was calculated so much to annoy the people of this country, ought likewise to be abandoned if such a number of men could be spared. The army of Portugal was generally understood to be small, and the troops but ill disciplined. If the commanders who were sent with troops to join this ill-appointed body, could achieve any thing of importance, they certainly would be entitled to great credit. France was much nearer Portugal than we were, and in all probability the Republicans would endeavour to stimulate the sluggishness of the Spaniards, with whom we were now at war, to attempt something against the Portuguese, and he was afraid that our assistance would only reduce them to that situation which had been the consequence of our former exertions in favour of Holland and our allies.

The SECRETARY AT WAR said he should say a few words upon those points of the honourable gentleman's speech, which at all bore upon the question. It was impossible to be perfectly accurate in the estimates for the service, and it was held to be safer to exceed than to fall under the amount. He expected that some of the articles would fall short of their present amount, that particularly which regarded the money allowed for the subsistence of soldiers, as they would either be reduced upon a peace, or kept in barracks or quarters near the coast, should the war be continued.

Sir WILLIAM MILNER asked if the accoutrements alluded to were for the cavalry to be raised in consequence of the late bill.

The SECRETARY AT WAR said, that it had no reference at all to the new Cavalry bill.

The first resolution was then put and agreed to.

The second resolution was then proposed, that the sum of 7500l. should be granted for reduced American officers, for the year 1797.

Mr. GREY wished to be informed when the extraordinaries of the army would be brought forward?

The SECRETARY AT WAR said, that they would certainly be brought forward some time in the course of the session, but he did not know whether it would be regular to do it at so early a period of the session.

Mr Chancellor PITT observed, that there was a particular period fixed by act of Parliament for producing the account of the army extraordinaries, which was not yet arrived; at the same time the amount of them would certainly be specified in the budget next week.

Mr. GREY replied, that he believed it was usual to bring them forward before the first of February, but that when the session commenced at an early period, they were commonly laid before the House previous to the opening of the budget. It was certainly extremely necessary that the expences of the last year should be known, before the House voted the estimates for the ensuing year.

The SECRETARY AT WAR then moved, "That a sum not exceeding 45,000*l.* be granted to His Majesty, for defraying the expences of making certain roads and bridges in that part of Great Britain called Scotland.—Granted.

"That a sum not exceeding 115,000*l.* be granted to His Majesty, for the payment of reduced officers of the army and marine. Granted.

"That a sum not exceeding 180,000*l.* be granted to His Majesty, for defraying the expence of the increased rates of subsistence to innkeepers.—Granted.

"That a sum not exceeding 136,000*l.* be granted to His Majesty, to defray the expence of supernumerary officers of fencible regiments and independent companies.—Granted.

"That a sum not exceeding 106,000*l.* be granted to His Majesty, to defray the expences of the Paymaster-General and Commissaries for the army."—Granted.

Mt. M. A. TAYLOR asked, if there was not a new office created, of Inspector General of invalids, and if there was, what salary was annexed to it?

The SECRETARY AT WAR answered, that no such office had been created, and the reason was, that this duty was performed by a gentleman who originally held another office, which was now abolished. He did not know what salary he had, but he supposed that he was paid in the same proportion with other officers of Government.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR said, his reason for asking was, that he thought every unnecessary office ought to be abolished, and therefore he was extremely jealous of those which were recently created.

The SECRETARY AT WAR hoped that the honourable gentleman would persevere in his search into the Government offices, and he would be much obliged to him if he would point out any that were unnecessary.

Mr. GREY rose to correct what he had said respecting the time of bringing forward the army extraordinaries; he found that they were made out last year on the 25th of December, previous to the opening of the budget, and he gave notice, that after the House was resumed, he would move for this account.

Mr. Chancellor PITT professed to have no objection to its being made out.

Mr. SARGENT moved — “ That a sum not exceeding 1,900,024l. be granted to His Majesty, for defraying the expence of the ordnance service.”

Mr. FOX understood that part of this sum was meant to be applied in order to furnish arms for the new cavalry raised by the late act of Parliament. He mentioned this, because he understood that, in every part of the country, there was so much difficulty in understanding and in executing the act, that a general hope was entertained, if it was not repealed, that, at least, it would not be proceeded upon.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that this was the first time that ever such a rumour had reached his ears. There were some trifling difficulties which might afterwards be removed by an explanatory act; but there was nothing, he was confident, in the act to obstruct the execution of a plan which must ultimately prove so advantageous to the country.

Mr. FOX was extremely happy to hear from the honourable gentleman that an explanatory act was to be introduced, because it would give those gentlemen who disapproved of the former act, an opportunity of voting against it.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR did not know where the Chancellor of the Exchequer had got his information; but he knew of several meetings that had been held in the country, where every gentleman put a different construction upon the act; for his own part, he considered it as quite impracticable to understand a single clause of it.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that after the honourable gentleman opposite had confessed his inability to understand the act, it would certainly be presumptuous in him or in any other person to attempt to explain it.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR defied the Chancellor of the Exchequer, though he had prepared the bill and carried it through the House, to construe a single clause of it.

The resolution was then put and carried.

Mr. SARGENT then moved, “ That a sum not exceeding 114,000l. be granted to His Majesty, for defraying the expences of the ordnance land service for 1795, for which money has not been voted by Parliament.—Granted.

“ That a sum not exceeding 74,000l. be granted to His Majesty, for defraying the ordnance sea service for 1795, for which money has not been voted by Parliament.—Granted.

“ That a sum not exceeding 125,000l. be granted to His Ma-

jefty, for defraying the sums laid out by the Office of Ordnance for 1796, and which have not been provided for by Parliament.—Granted.

Lord ARDEN moved, “ That a sum not exceeding 653,000l. be granted to His Majesty, for defraying the expence of half pay to naval and marine officers.”—Granted.

“ That a sum not exceeding 768,000l. be granted to His Majesty, for repairing and rebuilding ships of war.”—Granted.

Mr. ROSE moved, “ That a sum not exceeding 7000l. be granted to His Majesty for defraying the expence of the civil establishment of the province of Canada.”—Granted.

The House being resumed, the report of the Committee was ordered to be received on Monday.

Mr. GREY moved, “ That there be laid before the House, an account of the extraordinaries of the army incurred and paid from the 20th of December, as far as they can be estimated.” Ordered.

Monday, 5th December.

The bill for removing the lent assizes from Thetford to Norwich, was read a first time.

A petition against the bill from the Mayor and Corporation of Thetford was presented, stating that the lent assizes for Norfolk had been held from time immemorial at Thetford, and that the removal of them would produce great inconvenience to the North-west part of the county. The petitioners, therefore, prayed to be heard by their counsel against the bill. The petition was ordered to be laid upon the table till the bill be read a second time, and that then they should be at liberty to be heard by their counsel.

A petition of a similar nature was presented against the bill, from certain freeholders and inhabitants resident in the North-west part of the county. Ordered to be laid upon the table with the former petition.

A petition was presented from certain freeholders of the county of Flint, against the election of Sir T. Mostyn. The petition alleged, that at the last election for a Member for Flintshire, Sir T. Mostyn, John Lloyd, Esq. and the honourable Lloyd Kenyon, had been candidates to represent that county in Parliament; that Sir Thomas was incapacitated from being a Member on account of his being under age; that this was stated to the Sheriff, Sir Edward Price, the brother-in-law of Sir Thomas, who, nevertheless, persisted in returning him. The petition therefore prayed, that the election might be declared void, and that the House w^ould

pass such a censure on the conduct of the Sheriff as they should deem fit.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS, by whom the petition was presented, requested the House to be aware that it was not a petition against the return, but against the election, on the ground of the incapacity of the Member returned to sit, on account of his non-age. The case seemed to him to be similar to that in which there was no sitting Member; it therefore ought to have a prior consideration to other petitions. However, it was not his wish to press the subject with too much speed.

After a short conversation, the petition was ordered to be taken into consideration on the 2d of March.

A petition against the same election, by John Lloyd, Esq. was also presented, and ordered to be taken into consideration with the former petition.

Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL moved the order of the day for bringing Alexander Morris to the bar, which being read, and the said Alexander Morris being placed at the bar, the Speaker addressed him in the following manner:

Speaker—"What is your name?"

Prisoner—"Alexander Morris."

Speaker—"Alexander Morris, you are brought here in consequence of a report, made by the Committee to whom it was referred to try the merits of the Southwark election. That report states, that you were summoned to appear and give evidence before the said Committee, and that you neglected to appear in obedience to that summons—Have you any excuse to give for this breach of privilege? or any reason to offer why this House should not proceed to award the punishment to which you are liable for the same?"

Prisoner—"Sir, I did receive the warrant of the Committee, but I did not know I should incur the displeasure of the House. The perplexed state of my private affairs forced me to be out of the way. I throw myself upon the mercy of the House."

The Speaker immediately ordered him from the bar.

Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL said, that the House were now in possession of Mr. Morris's excuse. It was not on behalf of the petitioning candidate, in the present case, but for the sake of every individual Member, that he asserted substantial justice would not be done, if the orders of the House were not enforced. It remained now for the House to determine what punishment they would inflict upon him. He certainly did think that Mr. Morris might not have been aware of all the consequences of his disobedience. In all cases where it could be done with safety, he wished

to lean to the side of mercy ; the House, however, would decide—he left it entirely to them. It was his intention to have moved that Alexander Morris be remanded to the custody of the Serjeant at Arms.

The SPEAKER suggested, that it would be better, in the first instance, for the House to express their opinion of the conduct of the person in custody, and that afterwards they should found their punishment upon that opinion.

Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL accordingly moved, that Alexander Morris having been served with a warrant of this House, and having disobeyed the same, has been guilty of a breach of the privileges of this House.

Mr. GREY seconded the motion. No person could for a moment doubt that this breach was one of the most flagrant that could be committed, and though he agreed with the honourable Baronet in what he had said with respect to lenity, yet still he was of opinion, that lenity should be exercised with caution. When he considered the present case, he confessed that he did not see any thing in it that could induce him to believe that a severe punishment ought not to be inflicted. The prisoner had pleaded in excuse, that he was called away by some private business of his own, but of this he had advanced no proof, and the House were left in possession of his bare assertion in extenuation of an offence of the most serious and important nature. But it was not the conduct of Mr. Morris alone which ought to be exposed to reprehension. The crime had been committed under very suspicious circumstances, and it would not be unworthy of the House of Commons to enter into a full investigation of the business, and to inquire whether or not the agents of Mr. Thelluson had not been tampering with Mr. Morris, to prevent him from attending the Committee. For his own part, he was convinced that it might be brought home directly to Mr. Thelluson's agents : he should therefore move, after this motion was disposed of, that Alexander Morris be brought to the bar and examined.

The original motion was put and carried.

Mr. FOX said, that before the punishment of the offence was adjudged by the House, it might be proper for them to inquire into the motives from which it was committed.

The SPEAKER informed the House, that the ancient practice had been, when any person was taken into custody by the Serjeant at Arms, to decree the punishment for his offence, in consequence of which, the Speaker issued his warrant to commit the offender to the custody of the Serjeant at Arms, to the Gatehouse, or to New-

gate. Of late, however, they had adopted a different mode of procedure, by causing him to be brought to the bar of the House, during which time, the mace being off the table, no Member was at liberty to ask any questions,) and permitting him to be heard in his own defence, after which, the Speaker announced the judgement of the House. In the present instance, as he was not prepared to put those questions which might enter into the view of the honourable Member (Mr. Grey,) he suggested, that Alexander Morris should be called in, and that the Mace should be suffered to remain on the table, in consequence of which, every Member, through the medium of the Speaker, might put such questions to the prisoner as he thought fit.

Mr. GREY then moved, That Alexander Morris be brought to the bar and examined, the mace being on the table.

Alexander Morris being again brought to the bar by the Serjeant at Arms,

Mr. GREY proposed that the following question be put to him: "Did any person, after you received the Speaker's warrant, converse with you upon the subject of attending the Committee of the House of Commons?"

Mr. ANSTRUTHER signifying across the table his disapprobation of the question,

The Serjeant was desired to take Alexander Morris from the bar; which being done,

Mr. ANSTRUTHER explained the grounds upon which he disapproved of the question. The House had already resolved that Alexander Morris had been guilty of a breach of privilege. The next thing for the House to determine was, the punishment which it would adjudge to the offence; and then it would only remain that they should call in the prisoner, and ask why the punishment ought not to be inflicted upon him? The mode of procedure by examination, which the honourable gentleman had proposed, would, in his opinion, defeat the ends of impartial justice; for, supposing him to answer his question in the affirmative, then the answer would throw the guilt upon another; and, if he answered in the negative, his answer might draw upon himself a severer punishment than that to which he would otherwise be subjected, which, in either case, was directly contrary to the ordinary course of judicial proceeding. At all events, it would be holding out a temptation to him to accuse others in order to lessen his own punishment. Before such a step was adopted, he hoped that, at least, some precedent would be produced to justify it.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS could not reconcile his

mind to any examination of the prisoner at the bar. In his opinion, he ought to be called upon to say what he had to bring forward in his exculpation. The House might or might not be satisfied with the defence; if he referred to any fact, they might require proof of that fact; and after hearing what he had to advance for himself, they ought to decide upon the punishment due to the offence.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER moved, That he be again brought to the bar of the House to-morrow.

Mr. GREY professed to have no great objection to the motion, because, what had fallen from the honourable gentleman (Mr. Anstruther) had considerable weight with him. At the same time he insisted, that the matter ought not to be lightly passed over, and that some investigation ought to be entered into, of a business in which the dignity of the House and the rights of individuals were so deeply interested. He thought that it would be better to remand Alexander Morris to the custody of the Serjeant at Arms, to be again brought to the bar on Thursday next, on which day he should move, That Mr. Henry Speck and Captain Bartlett be also charged to attend.

Mr. GREY's motion was agreed to by the House, and in the mean time Alexander Morris was ordered to remain in the custody of the Serjeant at Arms, under the former warrant.

Mr. Grey said, that from the papers upon the table, they had only an account of the navy debt, for the year, to the 30th of September, and he wished to know if there was any mode of ascertaining its amount up to the 30th of November.

Mr. ROSE replied, that it would be impossible to give an accurate account of the navy debt up to the 30th of November, because the statements were collected only twice a year from the different ports in the kingdom, and that this being neither of these stated periods, the account could not be called for; but he apprised the House that there would be laid upon the table to-morrow, not a correct account, but a note from which they might be enabled to form a pretty correct estimate of the present navy debt.

Some explanatory conversation took place between Messrs. Fox, Grey, and Rose, respecting the accounts upon the table. The report of the Committee of Ways and Means was brought up; the resolutions were read and severally agreed to by the House.

Mr. FOX moved, That there be laid upon the table, an account of the navy bills paid from the 31st of December, 1795, to 30th November, 1796.—Ordered.

Likewise an account of the navy bills that have been paid, or

that may fall due, from the 30th of November, to the 31st of December, 1796.—Ordered.

Tuesday, 6th December.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved, that the order for the House being called over this day be discharged; which being agreed to, he next moved that it be called over on Tuesday next, which was carried.

After disposing of the other orders of the day, the House adjourned.

Wednesday, 7th December.

An account of the navy debt, due, and to become due, up to the 30th of December, was brought up, laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. GREY said, that upon reflection, he had abandoned the idea of urging the examination of Alexander Morris, now in custody for contempt of the House, and he thought it best to inflict some punishment upon the offence in the first place, after which, it was his intention to move for some inquiry, who were the persons guilty of tampering with Morris, and if he succeeded in shewing that very improper practices had been employed upon the occasion, he conceived the House would not refuse an inquiry in which their own dignity was so much concerned.

The SPEAKER said, that if it was not intended to call up Alexander Morris for examination, it would be unnecessary that he should again attend, as the House might proceed to consider what punishment they would inflict. In this case, the order for the attendance of Morris might be discharged.

Mr. GREY said, that he then intended to move to-morrow, first, that some punishment should be inflicted upon Morris, and then that an inquiry should be instituted, who were the persons who had been guilty of tampering with the offender upon this occasion.

A motion was then made, That the order be discharged.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER doubted whether Morris was a competent witness upon such an inquiry; he had no objection, however, that the order should be discharged.

The order was discharged.

Mr. ROSE moved for a number of papers to be laid upon the table, indicating the objects of taxation for the year, viz.

An account of the net produce of the duties on auctions, for the last four years;

An account of the produce of the old duty on bricks ;

An account of the produce of the duty on coffee and cocoa nuts ;

An account of the produce of the old excise duty on tea ;

An account of the produce of the duty on foreign and British spirits ;

An account of the licences on the Scots distillery ;

An account of the duty of a penny per mile on stage coaches ;

An account of the produce of the assessed taxes, for the last three years ;

The amount of the postage of letters for the last three years ;

An account of the import of sugar from the British West-India plantations ; and also from the East Indies ; and also an account of foreign sugars imported, distinguishing the quantities exported ;

An account of bar iron, oil of olives, hemp, and plantation staves imported ;

An account of the amount of pepper imported ;

An account of the amount of the customs, excepting the articles of wine, sugar, bar iron, &c.

All these papers were brought in, and referred to the Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. ROSE also brought in an account of the application of the disposable sum of two millions and a half, granted to His Majesty for the service of the year 1796.

General FITZPATRICK gave notice, that on Thursday se'n- night he should renew a motion which he had made in the last Parliament on the subject of the treatment of Monsieur de la Fayette and his unfortunate companions in captivity. He should be extremely happy to receive intimation before that time, of such steps having been taken as should preclude the necessity of a parliamentary interference ; but if he received no such satisfactory information, he trusted that the present Parliament would not do as the last Parliament had done—give any sign of acquiescence in a proceeding, upon the ignominy and horror of which there was but one feeling throughout the whole of the civilized world.

Mr. FOX gave notice, that on the 13th of February next, that was to say, as soon after the proposed recess as he could expect a full meeting of the House, he should move for the repeal of the two bills of the last session of the last Parliament ; bills which were too remarkable to require to be named more particularly ; bills which had produced so much sensation in the country, and so much serious alarm to every constitutional mind.

Mr. Chancellor PITT gave notice, that he should bring in a bill before the recess for the better relief of the poor. Of this bill

he had given some intimation before. It was now his intention to bring it in only, that it might be printed before the recess, so as to enable gentlemen to deliberate on its merits before it came to be discussed.

Mr. FOX desired to know what were his intentions with respect to the cavalry act?

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he meant immediately to bring in a bill to explain and amend that act.

The SECRETARY AT WAR brought in an account of the extraordinaries of the army, as far as the same could be made up to the 6th of December, and the account was ordered to be printed for the use of the Members.

The order of the day was then read, and the House went into a Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Hobart in the chair.

Mr. Chancellor PITT. The subject which I have now to lay before you is so extensive in its details, and of importance so evident and so striking, that I shall best gratify my own feelings, as well as best discharge my duty to the Committee by abstaining from all observations, which, though collateral to the subject of the day, would serve only to extend the consideration, and by proceeding as expeditiously as possible, to state distinctly and shortly, the resources which we may confidently rely on for the service of the year, and the amount of the expences which we may have to incur. Before I proceed to that most important part of the task of this day, the opening to the Committee a view of the general resources of the country, by which we may be able to provide for the necessary service of the year, and to shew them, that however great the demand may be, we are fully equal to the emergency, and prepared to meet it, it is my duty to state the amount of the Supply, as it has been already voted, and that may be yet necessary to vote, for the service.

NAVY.

The Committee will recollect that the vote for the ordinary of the navy was for 120,000 seamen and marines

men and marines	—	—	£.6,240,000
To which add the amount of extraordinaries			1,420,000

Making together the sum of	—	7,660,000
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But, that I may not leave any part of the service, much less this most valuable and favourite service, short; and that our exertions may be carried to the utmost possible length, I will take for the navy the farther sum of

		2,500,000
Making altogether the service of the navy, for the year 1797, amount to	—	£10,160,000

ARMY.

The amount of the sums already voted for the army is	—	—	£6,613,000
The account of the extraordinaries is not yet complete: but, as far as they can be made up with accuracy according to the account now presented, they appear to be of excess above the sum allowed last year	—	—	4,300,000
Total of the army	—	—	10,913,000
The amount of the ordnance	—	—	£1,623,000
The miscellaneous services, including the sums given for the provision of the emigrant priests, and under all the usual heads	—	—	378,000
Deficiency of land and malt	—	—	350,000
Sum for the diminution of the national debt	—	—	200,000
Surplus of grants in the year 1796, which ought to have come in aid of the service, amounting to 420,000l. would enable him to take the deficiency of the taxes at so much less; he should only take the deficiency of taxes at			1,023,000
A vote of credit which he intended to move for, and which he should afterwards explain, for	—	—	3,000,000
Making the total of the supply, for the year 1797			27,647,000
The first article of ways and means, was of course the land and malt	—	—	2,750,000
The growing produce of the consolidated fund I shall take at a very small sum, the reasons of which I shall state afterwards	—	—	1,075,000
Surplus of grants of the year 1796, and not applied in the year 1796	—	—	420,000
Profit on the lottery, after defraying the small sum which remains upon it, due to the Loyalists, amounting to 80 or 100,000l. I shall take at	—	—	200,000
The loan, the circumstances of which I shall afterwards explain	—	—	18,000,000
Exchequer bills, which I propose to issue in a new manner, and which I shall afterwards explain and prove to be both practicable and expedient	—	—	5,500,000
Total of Ways and Means			27,945,000

So that there is an excess of ways and means over the amount of the supply of 298,000l. I have stated the extent of what will be necessary for the supply of the year, but in order to anticipate, as far as human foresight can provide for an expence so large, in circumstances so difficult, I shall endeavour to bring every thing distinctly before the Committee. In the first place, I shall shortly state the terms of the loan, without comprehending all the singular combinations which have entered into this transaction, so creditable and glorious to the country. The new annual interest to be paid

for the loan, as it stands at present, is subject to a great reduction, if the funds should rise on the event of a safe and permanent peace, an event to which we have a right to look, and which this great display of national zeal and spirit is calculated to accelerate, yet I wish to view it as a permanent interest, and to consider it without the prospect of reduction. In that way the Committee will see that the loan was made at the interest of only 5l. 12s. 6d. per cent.; and I should not think myself justifiable if I were to provide a less sum than for the whole as a permanent annuity. And it is also my intention to add the usual sum of one per cent. to the sinking fund, as if the loan was not to be paid off. In this view, taking the interest at 5l. 12s. 6d. and adding one per cent. on account of the sinking fund, the total interest on 18,000,000l. at 6l. 15s. per cent. would be 1,215,000l. I have proposed that we shall look to an issue of Exchequer bills to the amount of 5,500,000l. as a fair and a practicable means for the service of the year, and I do this because I am convinced that so many may be circulated both with economy and advantage. Other species of floating debt have been found to be extremely inconvenient and injurious, from the enormity of the discount to which they fell on account of the length of period they had to run. But Exchequer bills were not subject to the same objection, though I should not even think it wise to issue them even for the period of a twelvemonth. I think that it is an available means for the public until the instalments of the loan shall be made, to issue Exchequer bills at short periods, say, at three months, which, bearing an interest of a fraction above five per cent. would be certain of never falling to a discount, because they would be receivable in payment of the instalments of the loan. The interest is as near as possible to 5 per cent. to accommodate it in the usual way to a certain sum per diem. I am confident that no inconvenience will be suffered from keeping afloat this amount of Exchequer bills, but that, on the contrary, it will be attended with advantage and accommodation to the public. If, at the end of the year, it should be found advisable to take them out of circulation, there will be no difficulty in the task. I propose to provide interest at five per cent. on the amount of these Exchequer bills, which will be 275,000l. It is my wish to look to every object for which we have to provide in the course of the year; with this view we must look to the amount of interest to be provided for the navy debt beyond the amount of the former votes.

The total excess of the Navy Debt beyond estimate of 1796, is	£8,250,000
Of this sum there was provided for	4,000,000
	<hr/>
remained therefore to be provided, interest for	4,250,000

I shall by and by, state to the Committee, the grounds of the computation that I made, and of the reasons why it has so far exceeded the estimate that I made, and I trust that I shall do it to their satisfaction. It ought to teach us to look forward to the probable addition that may be required for the service of the present year, and to provide largely against unforeseen circumstances. In this view, having already taken 2,500,000*l.* in the estimate of supply, I am confident that I shall cover every possible demand under the head of navy debt, if I provide interest for 3,000,000*l.* more.

There is only one article to be added to the above, and which at the same time ought not to be taken into the estimate of the expence of the year. The Committee will recollect that one of the taxes of the last session was, in its passage through Parliament, found to be so complicated, that it was expedient to give it up, "the tax on collateral succession." It was taken for the sum of 140,000*l.* and not having, as it was my intention to do, provided another tax in its room, it is now my duty to make up for that deficiency; but of course this is not a sum to be taken as any part of the expence of the current year.

The total of the annuity to be raised by new burdens on the people for these distinct heads therefore is	—	2,222,000 <i>l.</i>
But from this amount I have to deduct the sum which the East-India Company have engaged to pay, namely, interest on 2,000,000 <i>l.</i> of the above loan for four years, I have to deduct therefore	—	112,000 <i>l.</i>

Making the sum to be raised by annual taxes	—	2,110,000 <i>l.</i>
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I should not think that I had attained my object by the engagement of the India Company to advance this for four years, though undoubtedly it is a very handsome sum, if afterwards it was to be left afloat, and might come to be provided for at that period. But I have recent information that it is to be recommended to the Court of Directors, and by them to the General Court, that the Company shall undertake to pay this sum annually during the remainder of their existing charter. They certainly cannot undertake more liberally, and it is a handsome and becoming return on their part for the protection which they received from the country in the moment of their pressure, that they thus come forward to contribute so liberally to the public service.

My next duty is to enumerate the particulars of the taxes by which it is proposed to defray the heavy burden which it becomes necessary to impose, in order to meet the exigency of our situation. This is a painful, but at the same time indispensable part of my

duty: and I trust that we shall not shrink from performing this duty in its full extent, from any inconvenience which it may present, to our constituents, far less to ourselves; that we shall not fail to give a pledge to Europe that we have both spirit and resources to look our situation in the face, and to provide for every emergency which may arise in the present contest. While I talk thus, it is not because I feel the hardship on others to be small; on myself most assuredly I feel it to be great. Every additional burden which it is necessary to impose upon the country is undoubtedly a new subject of regret. But at the same time it is with peculiar satisfaction I reflect, that the period at which I am now speaking is pregnant with a thousand circumstances, which at once proclaim the inexhaustible resources, and the unconquered spirit of the British nation. At such a period I may confidently come forward without disguising the burdens which the exigency of the crisis requires, and at the same time without affecting to treat them as light—Light indeed they cannot be considered, except they be so represented in comparison with the immense importance of the objects of the contest—and in comparison with those unnatural and violent means which have been employed by the enemy, and have almost exhausted their resources. I would not do my duty if I did not propose such objects of taxation as may appear sufficient to meet the scale of expenditure for which it becomes necessary to provide. At the same time I am well aware that these objects will admit of much discussion, and that they cannot be fully considered, or fairly examined, in the first instance. Their particular consideration must necessarily be the subject of future debate. I have therefore to deprecate all hasty objections, and to solicit from the candour of gentlemen, that they will, at least, forbear to cavil at any object of taxation which I may propose, unless they are confident that they are acquainted with and can propose a better substitute. Where taxes are to be raised to so considerable an amount, as in the present instance, it is impossible to provide adequate means, which will not be liable to much objection. But though it will be impossible to avoid particular objections, it seems upon the whole to be the most fair and unexceptionable principle of taxation, that the more generally the burdens are diffused, the more likely will they be to be equal. If we have seen the revenue of this country, even under circumstances the most unfavourable, so rapidly accumulated and drawn from such various channels, we may surely look with confidence to the capability of the country to bear those further burdens which will be required in the present moment. It has surely shewn a degree of energy, even more than sufficient to encounter all the difficulties of the crisis. If, after all

the distresses of the last war, the burdens of which were at the time so severely felt, and which seemed almost to have exhausted the resources of the country, the revival of the revenue in the first years of peace was so rapid—if within a few years it has attained a state so flourishing, and if we, from the unfortunate experience of some years of war have been enabled to ascertain that it has now arrived at that degree of solidity and permanency, so as to leave the old sources of the national income untouched, and even shew itself equal to produce new, certainly we may look forward with confidence to prosperity beyond all estimate on the restoration of the blessings of peace. In the mean time the most equal principle of taxation will be to render the objects as diffuse as possible. And with this view I propose to select a few of the different branches of the existing revenue which seem best calculated for the purpose, in order to provide the additional taxes necessary for the service of the year.

The first branch of the revenue which I mean to propose to your attention is undoubtedly one of the most important, and which has appeared to me particularly eligible as a source of supply on the present occasion—I allude to that branch of revenue which has arisen from the excise. The taxes drawn from this quarter have in every instance been so successful as to give us confidence with respect to any new experiment which we may be induced to make. The first object which I mean to suggest is one which at different times has occupied the attention of the House, and occasioned considerable discussion—I mean the article of tea. Notwithstanding the additional duty lately imposed on this article, the sales of last year at the India House have considerably exceeded those of any former year, both in respect of quantity and of quality and value. It is evident that the consumption is greatly increased, and is now universally prevalent. This circumstance pointed out the propriety of a small additional tax. From the extensive consumption of the article, this tax must be immensely diffused, and therefore can only be felt in a trifling degree by any individual. Small, however, as that proportion might be, it is still my intention that this tax shall in no degree be allowed to bear hard on the lower classes of the community. I mean, therefore, to exempt from the operation of this tax, the whole of that coarser sort of tea, which, I understand, to be the common beverage of the poorer classes, and which at the India sales, does not exceed two shillings per pound. It may be urged that any additional tax on tea will have the effect to encourage smuggling. At the same time it may be remarked that the coarse species of tea, which is expressly exempted from the operation of the tax, is the most easily smuggled, the least liable to be damaged, and also the most likely to

be an object of consumption among the lower classes, who inhabit the coast. This additional tax I propose to rate at 10 per cent. on the value of the article, and if we attend to the circumstances of the additional importation and the great increase of the sales, we may reasonably expect that the return will be amply productive. I am aware that at former periods it has been found expedient to adopt measures of an entirely different tendency, which at the time undoubtedly were highly beneficial. But, though we owe the benefit of the suppression of illicit trade to the low price to which tea was reduced by former proceedings of the Legislature, it by no means follows that it is still necessary to continue the same policy. There is not the same danger to be apprehended from the attempts of smugglers after their capital has been withdrawn, their habits broken, and such regulations adopted, as must operate as an effectual bar to their future practices. If the return of peace tend to diminish the risque of smugglers, at the same time it will so reduce the charges of the India Company as will enable them to lower their prices. Taking the additional duty on tea at the rate of 10 per cent. on the average of the sales of three years, it would amount to 240,000*l*.

An additional duty on Sales by Auction of two-pence halfpenny in the pound on Sales of Estates, and three-pence on all Sales of Furniture, Goods and Merchandize, will produce 40,000*l*.

An additional duty of 1*s*. per 1000 on all Bricks made in Great Britain, I estimate at 36,000*l*.

There is another article, which I have to submit to the Committee, which suggests nearly the same considerations as the additional duty on tea. One considerable duty has already been gained on this article, and the consumption is so pernicious, that with respect to this article no man could wish that there should be any limits to the duty, so far as are consistent with the means of safely collecting it. So long as the consumption continues to a considerable extent, an addition to the duty must be considered as highly eligible in every view of policy and morals. I propose to raise the duty on spirits in the same proportion as before, viz. one penny on every gallon of wash, amounting to five-pence on every gallon of British spirits. The duty on foreign spirits will be advanced in the same proportion. The total amount on British and foreign spirits I estimate at the sum of 210,000*l*.

Another circumstance I have to mention, must be satisfactory, so far as it presents a new and eligible mode of supply, and yet must occasion no small degree of astonishment in the Committee—the circumstance to which I allude respects the state of the Distilleries in Scotland. The mode of collecting the duty on spirits in that

quarter has been by a duty on the contents of the still. The sum raised in this way, in the first instance, was so inconsiderable as not to deserve to be mentioned. By the last regulation it amounted to a sum of eighteen pounds, and had altogether produced a sum of one hundred thousand pounds. On calculating the amount of the quantity of spirits distilled in that country, still the duty was found very inadequate to that which subsisted on the same quantity in England. The disproportion is so very great, as ought not to be suffered to continue. I have had representations from the most respectable people in Scotland, suggesting, that either with a view to the morals of the people, or on fair grounds of policy, the present was a most eligible object of revenue. While a duty of eighteen pounds has been charged on the contents of a still through the rest of Scotland, only a sum of two pounds ten shillings has been charged on the same contents in the Highlands. The propriety of this exemption has been urged from various local considerations—the nature of the soil, the grain produced, &c. It may be proper to discuss, whether this exemption should be allowed to continue in its full extent? and whether the reasons which have formerly been urged, ought to be allowed the same weight in the present moment? The smallest sum which I propose to lay on the stills through the rest of Scotland, is triple the present duty of 18*l.* on the licence. Notwithstanding this increase, the duty will not be equal to the proportion of duties in England. The sum arising from this increased duty on the stills I estimate at 300,000*l.* Even if the effect should be to lessen the consumption of spirits, still the revenue will not suffer in any material degree. This diminution must occasion greater consumption of malt liquor, and in this way will equally contribute to promote the interests of the revenue, while it will have a much more beneficial tendency with respect to the health and morals of the people.

The next tax I mention with regret, because it will fall in some degree on the lower classes of the people, though it is one which, on the whole, seems to be a proper object of taxation. I mean an additional tax of 2*s.* 6*d.* on every hundred weight of sugar. This I calculate will amount to a sum of 280,000*l.*

On brimstone, bar iron, oil of olives, staves, I propose to lay an addition of ten per cent. amounting to 43,000*l.* and on all other customs, wines, coals, and prize goods excepted, a new duty of five per cent. amounting to 110,000*l.*

The whole of these duties from the customs will amount to 466,000*l.*

A noble lord formerly imposed a duty on houses; taking the

number of windows and the rent as the criterion of the sum to be paid. This last seemed to be a tolerably fair criterion of the different proportions which ought to be contributed by each individual, as it might in general be supposed that the rent and size of the house were regulated by the means of subsistence of the occupier. This however was in many cases a fallacious conclusion. In some instances in the country the extent of a house was found to be a disadvantage. The possession of an old large mansion-house, where it was accompanied with a small fortune, so far from subjecting the proprietor to additional taxes, ought rather to operate as an exemption. The value of houses of the same size was to be estimated not so much according to their extent, as according to the circumstances with which they were connected, such as the number of servants kept, and the amount of other assessed taxes charged on the occupier. The most equitable mode, therefore, seemed to be to levy a tax in proportion to the other assessed taxes, as these might be supposed to bear a more certain proportion to the fortunes of the individuals. The number of servants, for instance, kept in a house, will in general correspond with the stile of living and fortunes of the inhabitants. The sum arising from a tax levied in this way, I calculate will amount to 150,000*l.* and this with an addition to the assessed taxes, I take at 290,000*l.*

The conveyance of articles, which from the present advanced state of society, is put on so much a better footing, seems to present a fair object of taxation. It is, undoubtedly, but just that those articles should be made to contribute to the public service in return for that convenience and protection which they derive from the public. Letters in a particular manner come under this description. The increased facility with which they are transmitted to a distance, and the great convenience afforded to correspondence in consequence of recent improvements, may fairly allow that something should be added to the present rate of postage. The present rate of charging letters is first for one, two or three stages; it then goes on to eighty miles, and from that to one hundred and fifty. This mode of charging by stages is very unequal, as one stage consists of more miles than another. I am therefore of opinion that it will be a more equitable mode to charge by miles than by stages; I also propose to adopt a new regulation with respect to gradations, and with respect to the bye and cross roads. These regulations, with an additional penny to be paid on each letter, will, according to the best calculation, amount to about 250,000*l.*

An additional duty on stage coaches will produce 60,000*l.*

The conveyance of parcels by stage coaches and other vehicles

is also a fair object of taxation. I propose to subject them to a small stamp duty on booking them, which will afford additional security to the conveyance, and I estimate will produce 60,000*l*.

The only other tax which I have to propose is on a species of conveyance, which has also been much indebted to recent improvements—the conveyance by inland navigation. This accommodation to the trade and industry of the country, has owed much to the protection and patronage of the Legislature. To it the proprietors have been indebted for the permission to employ their capital in a way so beneficial to themselves and the public. It is therefore but fair that while the extent of their improvements discovers their increasing opulence, the Legislature should apply to this source of prosperity for assistance to the exigencies of the State. It is proposed to make a small addition to the tolls already charged on that navigation amounting to about one eighth. If an addition had been made to the tax on insurance against fire and water, and had been found fully to answer, surely those individuals who derived so much accommodation as well as a considerable saving from this new mode of conveyance, might, in return for the benefit they experienced, be called upon to contribute a small proportion to the exigencies of the State. As this eighth would be charged only on the existing tolls, all the exemptions which were now allowed, would still be permitted to hold good. The following is a

RECAPITULATION OF THE TAXES.

EXCISE.

10 per Cent. on Teas	_____	£.240,000
10 per Cent. on Coffee, &c.	_____	30,000
Auctions	_____	40,000
Bricks	_____	36,000
Spirits	_____	210,000
Licences on Scots Distillery	_____	300,000
Total of Excise Duties		£.856,000

CUSTOMS.

Sugar	_____	280,000
Pepper	_____	10,000
10 per Cent. on Brimstone, Iron, Olive Oil and Staves	_____	43,000
5 per Cent. on all other Customs, Prize Goods, Coals and Wine excepted	_____	110,000
Other Articles on Import, such as Starch, Bricks, &c.	_____	23,000
Total of Customs		466,000

Assessed Taxes, and new House Tax	_____	296,000
Regulation of Stamps	_____	30,000
Postage and regulation of Post Office	_____	250,000
Stage Coaches	_____	60,000
Stamp on Parcels	_____	60,000
Canal Navigation	_____	120,000

Total amount of new Taxes	_____	2,138,000
Amount of the Annuity to be raised	_____	2,110,000

Excess of Taxes		28,000

Such are the sources from which I propose to draw the necessary sums to provide for the interest of the enormous expence of the year. I am not insensible that in several of these taxes I may have made an erroneous calculation, and have extended the estimate of the produce beyond what it may ultimately turn out to be; in this, however, I trust the Committee will believe that I have been guided by the strictest regard to truth, and have taken the best criterion that was in my power, experience, for my guide. In those taxes which I could subject to that test, I have confidence in the accuracy of my statement; in those which are untried I have at least been moderate in my calculation. I am happy to say, that in looking at the resources of the country, we have a right to have confidence in the full production of these duties. They are diffused over so many articles, that they will operate with equality, and yet will not bear hard on the classes of the poor. If we look at the production of the permanent taxes, we shall have no reason to believe that the war has materially injured the sources of our prosperity.

The permanent Revenue for the year, ending 1 st October, 1796, amounted to	_____	14,012,003
And notwithstanding the operation of the new duties and the influence of a state of war, the average produce of those duties for the last three years, was	_____	13,855,000

On the side of supply, I have taken but the sum of 3,000,000 to meet the farther extraordinaries for the year 1797, though the extraordinaries for the last year amounted to a much larger sum. There are two grounds for my not thinking it necessary to make a larger provision; there were many articles of charge in 1796, which will not recur in 1797. And secondly, there were several sums advanced which are likely to be repaid, and upon which we have a right to calculate. For instance, in the advances of 1796, made by commissioners upon oath to the merchants of Grenada, there is the sum of 900,000*l.* which we have a right to believe was advanced upon good security, and which will, no doubt, be speedily available to the public.

Another expence of a particular nature has been incurred in the interval of Parliament. I allude to assistance which has been granted to the Emperor, in order to enable him to carry on his military operations. That the expence of the country has been swelled by exertions which have been so gallantly supported, and have terminated so beneficially to the common cause, I think no man will regret. I am persuaded no man will be of opinion that we ought to have withheld from a brave and faithful ally the assistance necessary to preserve his independence, and to restore him to glory. That assistance Ministers thought proper to grant, not ignorant of the responsibility which they thereby incurred, not forgetting their own duty, nor fearful of the event. They reflected that in the critical situation of the country it might have been matter of extreme delicacy to have brought forward a public discussion on the propriety of advancing a sum to a foreign court; they were aware of the alarm which might have been excited by any proposition to send a quantity of specie out of the country. It is well known that a generally received opinion of the mischief which may be attendant on a measure is often productive of the reality. The consequence of discussion might have been to have suggested the grant of a sum too small for the wants of our ally, or too large for the means of the country. On that account Ministers declined taking the opinion of Parliament. They did not so far yield to their desire of aiding the Emperor, as to step beyond the bounds of prudence, nor did they so tamely shrink from their own responsibility as to withhold that assistance which they deemed to be essentially important for the common cause. A sum of about twelve hundred thousand pounds has, I believe, been allotted to his Imperial Majesty. A future opportunity will be afforded for the discussion of this particular topic, which it was not otherwise necessary for me to mention in the present instance, than because I was anxious that no circumstance connected with the national expenditure should be kept back on this occasion. I am convinced, that, to have withheld the assistance which has been granted, would have been to have sacrificed the best hope of this country for bringing the present contest to a fortunate issue. It is my intention, if this conduct is found to merit your approbation, humbly and earnestly to claim and solicit your confidence in continuing the same system. I cannot, for the reasons I have already mentioned, propose to you any specific sum to be granted to his Imperial Majesty. But, if you think proper to repose in Ministers the same confidence in granting such occasional aid as they may see to be necessary, it shall, on their part, be exercised with the same caution. I have therefore proposed a sum of three millions; chiefly

with a view of enabling Ministers to make advances to our allies if we shall be compelled to persevere in the war. At the same time, we are not to consider such sums as lost to the country. We have seen too many of those qualities, the inherent companions of good faith and honour, displayed in the recent exertions of his Imperial Majesty to entertain any suspicions with respect to his conduct. And we may confidently hope for the happiest result in the present contest from his courage and perseverance, fed by our resources and supported by our constancy. On this ground I proposed the vote of three millions. I shall add nothing farther on the subject of army extraordinaries.

On the subject of navy debt, it was my desire and expectation, that a full and perfect account should have been laid upon the table, so as to have given to the Committee a distinct idea of the whole amount for the year. I find, however, that the account has not been presented entire. I am able to state roundly what it is expected to amount to, from the progress that has been already made, and as it is laid before the House :—

The net amount of the Navy Debt up to the 30th November appears to be	£15,171,000
To which add, as the probable sum to the 31st December, 1796	1,000,000
Add to this, the sum of Navy Debt first funded	4,414,000
And the amount of the Navy Debt on the 31st December, 1796, will be in all	20,585,000
On the 31st December, 1795, it amounted to	12,362,000
So that the Debt incurred in 1796 is	8,223,000
I foresaw and provided for	4,000,000
It has therefore exceeded my estimate, by	£4,223,000

And it is my duty to explain how this excess has happened ; not that I mean to shelter myself from the imputation of error, so difficult to avoid in a calculation so extremely large ; but to shew, as far as it is in my power, that it arose from circumstances which I could neither foresee nor prevent. The explanation will perhaps serve to convince the Committee that we may look with perfect reliance to a diminution of these expences for the current year.

In the first place, the expence of transports exceeded the sums which I had imagined, and which on the most mature calculations, made by persons of the greatest experience, I presented to Parliament, by no less a sum than 1,300,000*l*. This arose from a variety of circumstances which no human foresight could anticipate, and which, though the most to be regretted, are the easiest to be

excused. By the unfortunate vicissitudes of weather, by the delays and disasters which unfortunately happened to our expeditions; by the quantity of transports that were necessary to be taken up in consequence of these things, and by the new regulations of this board not being brought into perfect activity.

Another head of expence which has occurred, and which it was impossible to foresee, was the sum incurred for foreign transports, in order to bring into our own ports stores and provisions, which might otherwise have fallen into the hands of the enemy; for the high demurrage which we have been obliged to pay, and to which our Courts of Admiralty, however reluctantly, have found it just and equitable to submit. By these causes the expence of foreign transports, demurrage, &c. have amounted to 900,000*l*.

Another head of unforeseen expence was the unprecedented discount to which the navy bills fell, and which operated so injuriously upon commerce and on public circulation. On this head of discount there has been paid no less than the sum of 600,000*l*. Thus, therefore, the Committee will see that in three articles only, which it was impossible to anticipate, there has been expended near 3,000,000*l*.; and when they take into their farther consideration the circumstances of our having a new maritime enemy to encounter, and also a threatened invasion to repel, for which measures of precaution have been taken, it will not be thought that the sum of 4,200,000*l*. above my calculation is a very remarkable error. The practical use that we must draw, however, from the fact certainly is, not to avoid all estimates, but to make our estimates with as much correctness as possible, but at the same time to claim a large, though discreet, indulgence for unforeseen circumstances; and in the statement of the supply I think I have made ample provision for the naval exertions of the year, even if the obstinacy of the enemy should oblige us to continue those exertions through the whole of the year. The Committee will recollect that there has been already voted —

Under the head of Navy,	_____	_____	7,660,000
To which I added the farther sum of	_____	_____	2,500,000
			<hr/>
Making together the sum of	_____	_____	10,160,000
And to this I now add, for which I have also made provision, the probable sum of	_____	_____	3,000,000
			<hr/>
Total of Navy for the year 1797,	_____	_____	13,160,000

When the Committee will see, if they deduct the sums that have been paid under the head of transports, foreign freights for the

bringing home of flour, &c. together with demurrage, and the amount of the discounts on the navy bills, all articles which are not likely to recur, is fully equal to the expenditure of the last year, which, with all these unforeseen accidents, was 15,212,000*l*. In stating these estimates I have endeavoured to bring forward to the view of the Committee all the information which they can possibly desire on the subject. I have stated in its utmost extent the scale of expenditure which it may be necessary to incur, if we shall still be called to persevere in a contest connected with our honour, our happiness, our independence, and safety. I trust that I have said enough on this topic, and that if the alternative should be presented, the British nation would need no incentive to support such a contest with vigour and perseverance, rather than submit to protracted misery, evaded mischief, and certain disgrace. Such, undoubtedly, will be their conduct, if they wish to maintain the character which they inherit from their ancestors, or to transmit the privileges they enjoy undiminished to their posterity. In this period of the war (God grant that it may be short!) it is still matter of much congratulation, under all we have suffered, under all the accumulated difficulties arising from a contest as unexampled in its exertions, as transcendently important in its objects, and notwithstanding the violent and unnatural means employed by the enemy, that by opposing to them the constant fruits of regular industry, protected by a system of civil order, we have been able to meet the exigency of the crisis, and to provide ample resources for every branch of the public service. If after four years of war, not only the permanent revenue is not effected, but even the new taxes are found to be fully productive, if the state of internal industry and domestic improvement exhibit a picture of prosperity, which would amaze incredulity, if it did not address itself to observation, we have surely great and solid ground of satisfaction. I have formerly had occasion to describe the highly flourishing situation of our commerce, which even under circumstances the most unfavourable has increased with astonishing and unexampled rapidity. It is with infinite pleasure I am enabled to state that the receipts of the last quarter fully confirm the symptoms of our growing prosperity; and if those of the other quarters increase in the same proportion, the whole exports for the year will amount to thirty millions. This flourishing state of our affairs ought not to lessen our moderation, or abate our desire for peace. But that peace is not worthy of the name which is not calculated to afford internal and external security, to preserve to us the blessings of our Constitution, to protect the operations of our industry, and to maintain the dignity of the British character among foreign nations.

It is the restoration of such a peace which alone is truly desirable, and in seeking which, we ought to be careful not to mistake the phantom for the reality. I beg pardon for not being able to withhold the expression of my feelings on this subject. They are feelings which want not to be enforced by words. They are the feelings of the British nation spoken by substantial acts, evinced by the most unequivocal displays of zeal, the most liberal exertions in aid of the public cause, and supported by powerful and ample resources. It is my most fervent wish that the spirit of Britain may be an example to other countries, that her resources may ever keep pace with her zeal, and her preservance be crowned with the most distinguished success. I now move that, towards raising the supply granted to His Majesty, the sum of 18,000,000 be raised by annuities.

Mr. GREY said, that at a time when the enormous burdens with which the country was already loaded, required the utmost vigilance and caution which the representatives of the people could exercise, and when so great an additional weight was to be imposed, he hoped the House would recollect the important duties which their situation, as guardians of the public purse, called upon them to discharge, and which ought to induce a minute examination of the unexampled expence which had distinguished a war the most disastrous in which this country had ever been engaged, a war which he had ever thought was equally detestable in its principles, as it threatened to be dangerous in its consequences. Much as he admired the eloquence with which the right honourable gentleman had adorned the false and deceitful statements he had made, he should be sorry if it could so far blind the House to the duty they owed their constituents, as to induce them to lay on the burdens that were proposed without inquiring how the expence was incurred, and adopting measures by which the extravagance which prevailed in the public expenditure might in future be checked. To night the right honourable gentleman had introduced topics somewhat different from those upon which he had usually insisted. He had now thought proper to adopt, as the criterion of national prosperity, an account of the exports and imports, and upon this proof he had rested the triumphant conclusions he had deduced. Last year this standard had never been mentioned; it was the facility of raising money, it was the low rate of interest, upon which a loan could be negotiated, upon which the right honourable gentleman had placed the proofs of the flourishing state of our finances, and the undiminished vigour of our resources. Now he had not said a word of the plenty of money, or of the low rate of interest. Indeed with what propriety, with what decency could he have held that language,

when the House would recollect that the Chancellor of the Exchequer actually had it in contemplation to adopt that expedient, against which he had so often declaimed with so much vehemence—that a forced loan was in agitation, and that this threat was actually contained in a letter from the right honourable gentleman to the Governor of the Bank*, in order to accelerate the raising of the supplies for the present year. But now it seemed that it was from a comparison of the imports and exports that the extent of our prosperity was to be determined. He had occasion, however, to examine the account alluded to, and he had been told in that House, that the exports and imports did by no means ascertain the real state of our commerce, or support the conclusion of our prosperity. The very account itself must show that any inference founded upon it is erroneous. Thirty millions appeared to be the amount of our exports, of which one fifth was coffee. This was the important do-

* *The following is the letter of the Chancellor of the Exchequer here referred to by Mr. Grey:*

“ GENTLEMEN, Downing-street, Wednesday, Nov. 30, 1796.

“ Under the present circumstances, it seems of peculiar importance that a mode should be adopted for the providing for the service of the ensuing year, without incurring so heavy an annual charge, and so great an increase of capital as would attend a Loan made in the accustomed manner at the present price of the funds.

“ With this view, it is in contemplation to propose to Parliament, that all persons possessed of a certain income, should be *required* to lend a certain proportion of it, say one-fourth, to be repaid at the period and on the terms stated in the inclosed memorandum.

“ There is great reason to hope that many persons possessed of considerable income, both in the Capital and in the Country, will be induced, without waiting for this measure being enforced, voluntarily to contribute in a larger proportion than would be required of them; but the extent of such a contribution will, in a great degree, depend upon the effect of example, and particularly on the degree of countenance which the measure may receive from the Bank.

“ I will request the favour of you, to lay these considerations before the Court of Directors in the first instance, and after, if they think fit, before the Court of Proprietors, and to express my earnest hope, that from their zeal for the public service, and their sense of the importance of the present crisis, they will not be disinclined to take the lead in a measure which must have the most beneficial effect on public credit, and the most evident tendency to accelerate the restoration of peace on secure and honourable terms.

“ I have the honour, &c. &c. &c.

“ W. PITT.”

*To the Governor and Deputy
Governor of the Bank of
England.*

cument, then, upon which we were to be amused with lofty statements of our increasing wealth and unimpaired resources. While six millions were stated as the amount of the export of coffee, only two or three were stated as the amount of the imports—and yet, upon such a paper as this, was the true situation of the country to be ascertained! The right honourable gentleman had professed a sincere desire of stating every article of the public expence, that as far as possible he might meet it with a suitable provision. This was the language which the right honourable gentleman had employed in bringing forward every budget, and this profession of sincerity in the design had generally been accompanied with a failure in the execution. Last year the same desire of stating every expence, and covering it with a proper provision, had been professed, and what was the result? The navy debt might stand for an example. He professed to bring every thing forward; he had examined every item of the navy debt; this article had gone beyond his expectations, and the other would not again occur, and his conclusion was, that a saving this year would in all probability ensue. In December, then, a sum of 1,500,000*l.* was provided; instead, however, of this provision being found adequate, after having persuaded the House to refuse every inquiry that was proposed, and to resign every power of controul with which it was invested, the right honourable gentleman again came forward in April, when he had obtained more complete means of ascertaining what the public exigencies would demand, and after more than three months of the year had elapsed, and declared that four millions would be necessary. Upon this occasion he had again urged the necessity of providing for the supplies, by fairly stating their probable amount, and again it appeared that so far from this statement being correct, it did not amount to one half of the real extent of the navy debt. Now the right honourable gentleman had upon the present occasion taken to pieces a variety of articles of the account, repeating the same comments which he had used, stating that many of them would not occur next year, that many arose from temporary causes, and in spite of the fallacy with which in former instances this reasoning had been attended, in defiance of the experience of what had so frequently happened, he again estimated the amount of this service at three millions below the sum to which last year it had amounted. The right honourable gentleman said, that he must here act upon probable opinion, and doubtless in such cases this must to a certain degree be the rule; but when it was found every year that the amount of the sum calculated was increased, it was natural that experience should have pointed out a different mode of proceeding, and induced the right honourable

gentleman to come forward and state such increase as an expence which it was not difficult to see, and which it was proper to provide for. Notwithstanding all the reasonings he had employed, and all the probabilities of diminution he had urged, the navy debt had exceeded his statements ; and he should therefore have concluded, that if some articles which had not been expected had accrued this year, and were not again to be expected, there might others be found which likewise had not been foreseen. Every war had displayed the danger and the falsehood of such calculations, confirmed by what the right honourable gentleman's own experience suggested ; and it was his duty, therefore, to have observed the Constitutional mode of making provision for every expence which was likely to occur, a mode which at once secured the interest of the public, and preserved the proper functions of the House of Commons. The sum required for the service of the present year was 27,640,000*l*. Here, however, he must complain of the practice of bringing forward the ways and means before the House could be acquainted with the amount of the expences of the preceding year. Such a practice was highly unconstitutional, for it prevented the House from exercising its powers of controul, and enforcing that economy which it was bound to exercise. Upon the eighteen millions borrowed, there would be a discount for prompt payment of 200,000*l*. which had not been taken notice of, [Here the Chancellor of the Exchequer observed, that it was not usually put in.] Mr. Grey continued, that this was not of any importance to the general argument he supported. He maintained that every thing of which any estimate could be formed, ought to be included in the statements of the expence of the year, and properly provided for. There were a few observations which he had also to make upon the amount of the taxes imposed, and their fitness to meet the public exigencies. It was his opinion, that the taxes laid on since the war were inadequate to the debt that had been funded ; and upon a comparison of the different sums borrowed, with the amount of the taxes provided for the payment of the interest, a deficiency appeared upon the whole of 372,000*l*. This would evidently appear upon a comparison of the different sums of interest which had been stated each year since the war, with the produce of the taxes which had been imposed for the payment.

In 1793, the sum to be raised was	252,812 <i>l</i> .	produce,	145,682
1794	-	773,324	723,324
1795	-	1,227,115	1,255,592
1796	-	1,834,354	1,05,228

In which statement it was to be observed, that in the produce of the year 1795 was deducted 200,000*l.* stock in hand of the wine duty, and 40,000*l.* from the regulation of franking, but upon the whole, there was the deficiency of 372,000*l.* Allowing, however, for what had been diverted to the payment on account of the Spanish armament, there would remain the permanent deficiency of 372,000*l.* which he had stated. If then it was considered that the wine tax would not be so productive in future as it had been in 1796, because the produce of the stock in hand was to be deducted, as no provision was made for the 315,000*l.* interest of the old navy debt, and as interest was to be provided for those funded in October, it would be necessary to provide for these before the right honourable gentleman could say that the public expences were fairly covered. The right honourable gentleman had provided funds to the amount of 1,100,000*l.* but if all the articles unprovided were taken into view, the amount of the old navy debt, the deficiencies of the funds already allotted, the funds provided ought to have amounted to near three millions, at least there would be a deficit of more than 800,000*l.* These points at present he only took in a general view; at some future period, as soon as possible after Christmas, he intended to bring forward the subject for minute examination. Upon a more extensive investigation of the subject it would be found, that great and pressing as the burdens about to be imposed were, there was still a million of fresh taxes to be found. That so much of the expenditure consisted of sums over which Parliament had exercised no controul, was a point of serious importance, and demanded particular discussion. If they retained any regard for the functions with which they were invested, and that economy which the situation of affairs so much required, the House would consider the subject with serious attention, and adopt some effectual plan to check the extravagance which was practised, and that neglect of their control which marked the public expenditure.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that though he chiefly considered the observations of the honourable gentleman as intended to convey a notice of a future discussion of the subject, he could not allow them to pass altogether without remark. He was ready to admit that the exports and imports were not very correct, and he never meant to argue from them as by themselves supporting a precise conclusion with regard to the state of our commerce. They were, however, as correct now as they were on former occasions, and by a comparison of them with what former statements of the kind afforded, it appeared that the excess of the exports over the imports was as great as in time of peace. It was not a new topic which he

had introduced on the present occasion. Year after year, he had been told that the exports and imports were fallacious, and in reality he had never founded any inference upon them absolutely, but merely obtained a conclusion by a comparison with other years, conceiving it fair to suppose that the same degree of incorrectness prevailed at one time as at another. He was glad that the honourable gentleman had reminded him of the loan. It might have been imagined, indeed, that he had omitted saying any thing of the terms on which it was concluded; because, if there ever was a loan which required nothing to be said in its defence, it was the present. In truth, he had intended to have said a few words upon the subject, but in the multiplicity of the details he had to go through, it had escaped him. If the honourable gentleman, however, compared the state of the three per cents. when he considered the rapidity with which the subscription had been filled up, the rate of interest that was to be given, and the sum of capital to be created, had he attended to the effects of the sinking fund, and that in six years under particular circumstances, the rate of interest in the five per cents. might be reduced to four per cent. he would not find that the terms of the bargain required any apology or defence. He would find that the Public had saved no less than 16 per cent. at present, and, in a possible event, not less than 50 per cent. If the honourable gentleman would compare the four last years of the last war with our present situation, after four years of war, he would find that only one loan, in which the actual interest was so low, and this at a period when the general funds were somewhat higher, and when the interest of the particular fund was not reducible, as in the present case. He was surprised to hear the objection to the discount, for it had been made for the first time in a case in which it could not at all apply. If there was no necessity for the issuing of Exchequer bills by the quantity of money received upon the loan in prompt, the interest which must have been allowed upon the former would have been saved, so that in this view the advantage would be considerable. It was stated by the honourable gentleman, that the taxes imposed since the war, had fallen short, and were inadequate to the sums that had been funded. It was not fair, however, to consider the produce merely, but it was necessary to consider what the taxes would probably produce when the war had ceased. The honourable gentleman conceived the taxes of 1796 to have fallen short, because he supposed that the wine tax would not be so productive, but several of them had not yet been fairly brought to proof; and the wine duty had laboured under disadvantages which it was needless to enumerate. But unless the trial was fairly made, and it was ascertained, that in the course of a

full year, the wine duty had not produced the sum at which it was estimated, it could not be said that any deficiency existed. Besides, although they had fallen during two years of war, might not they rise in peace to the sum at which they had been stated? The argument of the honourable gentleman only proved that it was proper to wait and see what the event would be, and if it should appear that a real deficiency existed, he should then feel himself called upon to come forward and move an additional provision. But in the first place it was necessary to examine the subject with accuracy, before they admitted such a conclusion, and adopted such a measure. From such an inquiry he did not feel himself disposed to shrink. He conceived it probable, that the taxes would be equal to all the funds which they were assigned to support, and he wished to know, whether the experience which had already been obtained, was such as ought to have induced him to come forward to propose additional burdens, while the necessity of so unpleasant an alternative was by no means ascertained?

Mr. GREY said a few words in explanation, to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied.

Mr. FOX. Notwithstanding the abundance of evidence which has been brought forward by my honourable friend, to prove the erroneous manner in which the right honourable gentleman opposite to me has thought proper to treat the subject of this evening's consideration; notwithstanding also the opportunities which will be given of future discussion, I should not be satisfied that I had performed my duty as a Member of Parliament, were I to pass over this day without expressing some of those feelings which have been excited by hearing one of the most false statements of finance that ever was brought forward; calculated merely to delude the people of this country, and accompanied with some political observations which are a libel upon the Constitution, if indeed it be a free Constitution: Such observations that I would sooner die than avow them; for if the principles conveyed by them are true, the end to which they lead must be the downfall and destruction of this House and all its privileges, and the establishment of a dictator upon its ruins. I shall first, however, make some observations on what has fallen from that right honourable gentleman, relative to the subject of finance. It has ever been his boast, that in opening his budget, he has always come forward with plain, true, and candid statements of the full extent of the charges to be made for the current service of the year. Upon more occasions than one, I allow this to be the case, and I have not hesitated to bestow my praises upon such conduct; but as to the business of to-day, after the dis-

cussion that has taken place between him and my honourable friend, is there in the whole country so miserable a dupe, or is there a being so corrupted and so entirely devoted to every measure of Ministers, as to say that a fair statement has this evening been laid before us? It is unnecessary for me to enter into minute details, I wish to call the attention of the Committee to principles. By the consolidation act (27 G. III. c. 13. s. 72.) it is provided that a paper shall be laid upon your table, with an account of the annual charges of the public debt, together with an account of the produce of the duties imposed, or of any addition that shall be made to the revenue for the purpose of defraying the increased charges. Now it appears, that in fact since the commencement of the war, the increased charges amount to upwards of four millions, and that taking the amount of taxes after, making allowance for the Spanish armament, the stoppage of the distilleries and other necessary admissions, there is a deficiency in the provision made for these charges, to the amount of 80,000*l.* but this does not appear in the paper officially laid before the House. But we are told, that were it worth while, let this be observed, *were it worth while*, all this could be explained in a most satisfactory manner. What does the right honourable gentleman mean? will he dare to lay claim to the character of a fair and candid Minister by barely telling us “ what signifies what is the actual produce, my calculations are perfectly accurate, and that is sufficient ;” it may be said, and indeed it has been said, that in stating this deficiency many of the taxes have been taken only for part of the year, and some of them have not commenced. This, however, is not the case. I take them from the 5th of July, 1795, to the 5th of July, 1796; but let them, if you please, be taken from the 10th of October, and the conclusion will be found to be the same. But the right honourable gentleman farther says that a deficiency may actually take place during the years of war, but that on the return of peace, and by the assistance of additional regulations, ample compensation may be made. If this be the mode of reasoning to be adopted, what is the use of this boasted paper of accounts? It is a mere form, a shadow. Let the deficiency be what it will, 80,000*l.* or one million, let the usual accounts be made up to satisfy the words of the statute and let us leave the real deficiency to be afterwards provided for the best way we can, or by some peace regulations. What is this, Sir, but flying from duty, and turning the business of finance into insult and mockery? Such conduct too comes with a peculiar ill grace from that right honourable gentleman. His inconsistencies upon the present occasion it is impossible to enumerate. I remember well, upon the subject of spirits, he was for-

merely of opinion, that the duty would be too great ; but now it is impossible to raise it sufficiently high ; and with the most astonishing facility of argument, both war and peace are to tend equally to render it productive. It was ably contended by my honourable friend, that the navy debt was not *de facto* provided for, and what is the sort of answer we receive to this “ There is, or there may be, “ something like a deficiency, but look to my calculations, I can “ make it all right in point of figures, and, as to three, four, or eight “ millions of deficiency, I can provide for that some way or other.” To make such excuses and observations as these may indeed cost little ; but are they satisfactory, are they to be endured ? Is this to be called a fair candid statement ? Are we to demand and look for truth and reality in the investigation of the state of our finances, and to be merely amused and entertained with the right honourable gentleman’s opinions, conjectures, and imaginations ? My honourable friend, in stating this actual deficiency of taxes to the amount of upwards of 80,000*l.* has taken the produce of the taxes up to July 1796; and he has fairly and properly demanded, that before laying on fresh burdens, this deficiency be acknowledged and provided for, or at least that in the mean time the House be not insulted with the production of a paper which, contrary to fact, supposes this to be provided for already. To understand what I now urge, I only wish gentlemen to read that paper and judge for themselves. To come to a fair decision, I do not conceive it necessary to go back step by step; but to look merely at the sums total. But here, indeed, the right honourable gentleman might be inclined to interrupt me, and tell me, as he has already told the House in his speech, that for the real produce of taxes we are not to look to a time of war ; and yet with the same breath we are informed, that this has been so glorious and so fortunate a war, that our commerce, in point of exports and imports, exceeds any former period of peace, and the old taxes are more productive than ever. If this be true, it is strange indeed, that while the war has not affected the old taxes, it should diminish the amount of those which are newly imposed. As to the exports and imports, my honourable friend has mentioned one curious particular, that one fifth of the increased exports consist of the article of coffee, and in order to shew the Committee the fallacy of any dependence upon such sort of statements, I remember that formerly the coffee exported in the Custom-house books exceeded that which was imported ; now as no one could be such a fool as to believe that more of that luxury was sent out of the country than was brought into it, upon examining the cause of this apparent inconsistency, the mystery was explained by finding that the coffee ex-

ported was estimated at a considerably increased value. The right honourable gentleman, however, immediately informs us, that he reasons only comparatively from the present state of exports and imports. I observed nothing of that comparative reasoning in his first speech. The right honourable gentleman told us, in something of a commanding manner, that the exports of the present year would amount to 30 millions. The country, Sir, indeed stands in need of some comfort, and I should be sorry to diminish any of its substantial comforts; but if this increase of exports and imports be a source of consolation, as far as it goes, it has not been wanting at any period, except during some part of the American war. During the war, under the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole, and also during the seven years war, this increase was equally observable. I am not a person inclined to erect theories, but rather to oppose them if not confirmed by some sort of experience; but I have no doubt there are many persons who can give satisfactory reasons why exports and imports should increase in the time of war, generally speaking, and why the American war proved to be an exception. It may likewise be added, that such a proof of the flourishing state of the resources of the country was never brought forward by Mr. Pelham, Lord Chatham, and other Ministers, when placed in a similar situation in the wars to which I have alluded. I must now beg leave to make a comparative statement of finance of a different nature, and take the liberty of making a calculation of what must be the peace establishment at the end of this war. To do this, I take the average of the additional charges for the five last years, and add about 500,000*l.* more, which, altogether, will amount to about four millions. This day we are called upon to vote about 2,200,000*l.* yet enormous as this sum is, if the House and the public attend to the real statement of facts brought forward by my honourable friend, although the House is about to vote burdens equal to the whole that have been imposed in some of our most glorious wars, equal likewise to the first three years of the French and American war, they will find, that above one million more is still actually necessary. If this be true, as it certainly is, what shall we say of the *fair statement* of the right honourable gentleman? I come now to make some observations on the terms of the present loan. The terms of the loan during the latter years of the American war, I have not now exactly in my memory, nor is it necessary to say much about them. The remarks I mean to make at present, relate to the variety of ways which the right honourable gentleman finds it convenient to bring forward the different loans he has had to negotiate. Last year we heard of nothing from him

but the wonderfully low rate of interest, being only 4l. 13s. 6d. but we never were informed of the disadvantages attending its being invested almost entirely in a three per cent. stock. This year it seems we are to hear little or nothing about the interest, but we are to have our ears filled with encomiums upon the goodness of the terms. What would that right honourable gentleman have said to me, had I last year stated to him, that upon the loan for the succeeding year he would have to give 5l. 12s. 6d. per cent interest. I must here also bring to his recollection the act for the appropriation of one per cent. for the reduction of the debt. Has he forgot that bill and the principle upon which it is founded? I remember that when I stated the hardship which by the operation of that bill was attached to succeeding Ministers, by obliging them to borrow more than they immediately wanted, he with some degree of truth, replied, that they would not on this account be forced to borrow at higher terms by reason of the additional credit arising from the appropriation of the one per cent. to the purposes intended. If this was the case in 1782, is it to be left out of the calculation in 1796? This additional one per cent. will make the interest to be raised 6l. 15s. But I shall now come more particularly to consider the terms, and this may be done in two or three different ways. Let us first consider it in point of interest, and state it thus: At the time the bargain was made, the three per cents. were at 56. Of course the interest to be made in that stock was 5l. 7s. the four per cents. I believe were something near 73, and the interest about 5l. 11s. but by the present bargain no less is given than 5l. 12s. 6d.: this, however, is taking it in the most advantageous point of view; but let us consider it differently. The discount, as I understand, to be allowed for prompt payment is three per cent. When, therefore, a subscriber goes on the 13th of January to pay his money, he is in the first place allowed the three per cent. discount, and also one quarter of a year annuity, amounting to 1l. 5s. so that in fact making the proper allowance, he pays only 95l. 12s. for which he becomes entitled to 112l. 12s. five per cent. stock. Now suppose this subscriber had laid out his money in five per cent. stock, without the intimation of the present loan, the five per cents. at the time of the bargain were at 86 and a half, but allowing for the dividend becoming due in January, 2l. 10s. is to be deducted, so that at the time the first installment is to be paid, for 84l. sterling the subscriber would receive 100l five per cent. stock; there would then remain of the sum he has to pay, which is 95l. 12s. 11l. 12s. more to lay out, and making the proportional calculation for this sum, in which I think I cannot be much mistaken, the whole quantity of

stock he would receive would be 113l. 16s.; about 26s. more stock than a subscriber to the present loan, or about 1s. 4d. more interest. All this appears to be in favour of the terms of the present loan; but let me now distinctly point out the real difference between persons in these relative situations of old or new subscribers. The old subscribers in the five per cent. stock are in this situation, that if the fund rises the government has them at their mercy, by being very soon enabled to pay them off at par. If indeed the fund should become lower, he still continues to have this five per cent. but observe how the interests of the new subscribers are guarded. They can if they please hold their stock three years after the five per cents. are redeemable at par, and may then receive payment in three per cents. at 75, so that at all events a subscriber to the new loan will be entitled to 4l. 10s. perpetual annuity, while the old subscriber may be obliged, from the circumstances of the case, to put up with only three per cent. Let us now, on the other hand, suppose, that credit is to be at a low ebb, and that the gloomy opinions of many Members of this House, respectable, certainly, from their situation and information, are to be realized. It is the opinion likewise of many out of this House that a peace would only be another name for a truce, and a sort of breathing interval to enable us, with more vigour and effect, to renew hostilities. In this case, it is supposed, that credit and the general state of the funds would be depressed. Still, however, by the present bargain, the new subscribers are safe; for it is stipulated, that under such circumstances they shall have a right to be paid at par. Are not these advantages much more than a counterbalance to the petty advantage of receiving six and twenty shillings more stock in the first instance? I have farther to observe, that in a case of this kind I know no better guide in our speculations upon what is to come, than what is to be found in our experience of the past. These new subscribers to the loan may demand payment at the end of two years after the peace. Let us then look to the American war. The Preliminary Articles were signed in January, 1783, and two years afterwards, in January, 1785, three per cents. were at 55, 56; four per cents. I do not recollect; but five per cents. which is more to the point, were at 88, 89. If a similar effect follow the present peace, still the subscribers have a right to be paid at par. It is hinted to me that I state the period too early, for that the definitive treaty did not take place for some time afterwards; I remember that was an error of the Minister under whose auspices that treaty was conducted; and I hope that any definitive treaty to be made in future will follow somewhat nearer than six months after the signing the prelimi-

nary articles. There is another curious consideration to be taken into account in the terms of the present loan. The right honourable gentleman professes uniformly to meet the full extent of the charge to be incurred. Has he done this in negotiating the present loan? I have allowed that subscribers to his loan have one shilling and four pence per cent. less interest than any other present purchaser in the five per cents. but I have likewise shewn, that this is much more than compensated by the bonus which is given, and this bonus is given in a most singular manner. It is not a charge made upon the purse of the public to-day, but reserved for a future occasion. The right honourable gentleman's predecessors were satisfied with saddling their posterity with the principal and interest of the sum they borrowed and expended, but he, this fair and candid Minister, whose maxim was uniformly to be, "Pay as you go," has invented a machine by which he throws upon the shoulders of posterity not only the principal and interest of loans, but the bonus also. Many, no doubt, have said, but not, I believe with the approbation of that right honourable gentleman, "Put the evil day afar off, raise money with as little immediate inconvenience as possible." This, in fact, resolves itself into nothing else than the former exploded defence of the exploded mode of raising money by navy bills. The right honourable gentleman has made some observations upon the present zeal discovered by the people. What are the motives which have produced that zeal it does not become me to say! But does the right honourable gentleman mean to say that this plan of open competition is a new idea of his own? I request him to recollect what passed in this House in the year 1793: a most extravagant loan was then brought forward, and I voted against it. With some degree of arrogance he then demanded "What would you have me do?" It was then suggested by others, and I well remember by myself also, "throw it open to the public—try what they are inclined to do." What was the answer? that the loan was by no means a bad one; but even if it were, the expedient recommended was in no case to be resorted to. This, Sir, happened in the year 1793, after the execution of Louis XVI. when we were fighting for religion, morality, and the very existence of civil society; yet even while these great objects were at stake, the Minister thought proper to give the preference to the extravagant offers of a few individuals rather than feel the general pulse of the public. What has produced the remarkable change, or has any change been actually produced? Are the people more anxious for the war now than they were then?—No!—the Minister has held out the hope of peace, and to procure a peace the peo-

ple will do that which they would not do to carry on the war. I was now about to take notice of what has fallen from the right honourable gentleman of a political nature; but it is impossible to pass over the subject of the navy extraordinaries. We have indeed given too much confidence in this respect. About this time twelve months the navy debt was four millions nearly, and well do I remember the expression; he with *perfect confidence* calculated upon one million and a half being sufficient to cover the charges of the ensuing year. In April, however, we find it mounted up again to four millions. So late as last October the subject was again discussed. I then gave it as my opinion it would in the course of the year amount to nine millions, but he then *confidently* stated it could not be more than seven millions, and now at last we are told it amounts to 8,200,000l. I do not say that this could altogether be avoided—but let me hold it up as a warning for the future. Good God! Sir, what must be the consequence of such a system of profusion of the war should continue for six or seven years? Is the fortune of any country equal to such expence? And what is his mode of accounting for this? The expence is *unforeseen*, and the price of every article has advanced! What! Sir, did not the Parliament, during the last session, sit almost every day to consider the subject of a threatened scarcity? And if there was one period more than another in which the right honourable gentleman ought to have made the highest calculations, was it not in December, 1795? Even in April when he came forward again with his estimates, what reason was there to induce him not to calculate upon the high price of provisions? As to the particular article of butchers meat, I know not that the right honourable gentleman can, up to the present moment, venture to say it will be lower. I should be glad to know, if the Minister is prepared to tell us, that the price of butchers meat, and meat for salting for the navy, is likely to be at a more moderate price than it is at present. I fear the Minister has no such good news to communicate to the Committee. How far the Minister's measures have occasioned the present high price of all the articles of life may very fitly be made the subject of future enquiry.

With regard to the subject of the bills of Grenada in aid of commercial credit, and the expectations of the Minister as to what may be brought to the public aid on their account, I can say nothing; as the Minister has given to the Committee no specific information upon that subject, I can only say, that most probably the Minister will have another opportunity of making another experiment of the same kind upon this subject, if he is partial to it.

Mr. Fox said, that he was now come to the vote of credit, on

which the Minister had spoken out plainly and candidly. He had said he had given to the Emperor, without the consent of Parliament, twelve hundred thousand pounds, and that he is to continue to do it if he shall think it necessary. He had not seen the date of this advance; but those who were Members of the last Parliament could not have forgotten that for the last three months of that Parliament, not a week elapsed in which some question was not put to the Minister, in which he was called upon to declare, whether he intended to grant any pecuniary assistance to the Emperor? Did the Minister mean to say he intended to give it to him, but that he thought his own authority for that purpose was sufficient; that it was superfluous to submit such a subject to Parliament; that he could issue the money of his own authority? Perhaps he did. He might borrow an example from his own conduct to keep the measure in countenance. It was of a piece with his advice to His Majesty to continue him as his Minister against the declared opinion of the House of Commons in the year 1784. But now he had gone one step farther than to advise the king to continue him as Minister, in opposition to the express opinion of the House of Commons, for now he had shewn to the people of Great Britain that he is a better judge than the Parliament of Great Britain, to whom their money, and how much of it, also shall be given to any foreign Prince. “If (said Mr. Fox) these are the sentiments to be acted upon in this country; if the Minister be permitted to carry them into effect; I declare for myself, that the Constitution of this country is not worth fighting for. I wish to know on what principle it is that the Minister takes this power upon himself rather than refer it to the Commons of Great Britain, to whom, and to whom only, it constitutionally belongs. If he directs the application of the money of the people, thus upon foreign affairs without the consent of Parliament, I see no reason why he should not claim the same power, (as I dare say he will if he succeeds in this) over the whole of our domestic concerns. I am sure the reason he gives for the one, will just as well apply to the other. He says that Parliament could not calculate so well as he could upon the necessity, and upon the amount. That may be said, as correctly of our domestic as of foreign affairs. Until this instance occurred, the Minister thought it decent to apply to Parliament, and to give you an estimate of what you are to provide for; but now he tells you that he did not think it necessary to consult you, because you are not judges of the extent of it. Did he consult you on the principle of it? He certainly did not. He suffered the last Parliament to be dissolved, he suffered you all to meet your constituents with an as-

assurance (I do not say his positive and declared assurance, but by his silence he gave you an implied assurance), that no money was to be advanced to the Emperor in the interval of the Dissolution. On the 27th of December you met. Did he give you any intimation of his having advanced this money before you were called together? Did he give you any intimation of it before this very night, when he comes before you with his fresh burdens on the people? Not a word! For this conduct, I say, he ought to be impeached. He has had it in his power to consult you upon this subject long ago, as it was his duty. He has neglected to do so, by which he has manifested a determination to dispose of the money of the people of this country, without consulting their representatives. This is aggravated by his not calling Parliament together sooner. If he had advanced the money before you met, why did he not tell you so: What reason can be assigned for this? In the name of God, what can be said but that the Minister thinks his judgement better than the judgement of the representatives of the people of Great Britain? He has said much upon the time on which this money was advanced. If he had any intention of advancing this money before the dissolution, why did he not state that intention to the last Parliament? Or if he found out the necessity of it since the dissolution, might he not have said so to the present Parliament long ago? But he has done it for the purpose of establishing the principle that Ministers are better judges of the manner in which the public money is to be applied, than the representatives of the people. The Minister says that we should feel the utmost confidence in lending our money to the Emperor, because we have seen in the Emperor those heroic qualities which usually accompany good faith. Now, supposing heroism to be a good criterion of good faith in pecuniary concerns, I should like to try the effect of this mode of reasoning. Suppose for a moment that we were in a state of neutrality with regard to the French Republic, and it was proposed that we should lend money to the French, would the Minister say we should lend them money? Certainly he would not: and yet if good faith in pecuniary engagements was to be measured by heroic qualities, there are none to whom we should be more ready to lend our money; for of their valour they have given abundant proofs."

Mr. Fox then proceeded to state the situation of the Emperor and the French at this moment, in which he maintained that with all the successes of the Austrians in the latter part of the present campaign, another could not be opened under circumstances of more advantage to the Emperor, than those in which he had been placed at the commencement of the last. He here took notice of

the recent successes of the French in Italy, and by way of answering the praises that were bestowed on the good qualities of the House of Austria, he instanced the cruelties that had been exercised on the unfortunate M. La Fayette, which he said excited horror all over Europe.

He then proceeded to observe, that the Minister had to-night omitted the brilliant comparison which he had often made between the English and the French finances. The French had been stated week after week, and month after month to be not on the verge but in the gulph of bankruptcy. He had omitted also to state that the French had, by becoming the allies of the Dutch, partaken of the sluggishness of the Hollanders. He did not know, he said, whether the French had passed the gulph of bankruptcy. He hoped they had, for while they were in it, they were most dreadful enemies to this country. But to return to the Minister's calculation of events. He had year after year calculated upon the events of the war, and year after year the public had been misled by his calculations. At one time he was sure the navy debt would only be a million and a half; after that he calculated the same debt at four millions—then at six or seven millions, and now it was stated to be above eight millions. What security had the House and the public that the Minister would not miscalculate in future, as he had already done, in the course of the present war? By his miscalculations he had added to the debt of this country one hundred and fifty millions. by his miscalculations rivers of human blood had been made to flow all over the world. The Minister now talked of peace; he hoped in God we should soon enjoy that blessing; but as the Minister was so fond of his own calculations, he wished he would some day or night sit down in his closet and calculate what a sum of human happiness he had destroyed by his false calculations already; what a waste of human life he had occasioned, because he could not sooner discover that the French were “capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other powers.” He did not wish to distress the Minister with any unseasonable applications, but he believed he should puzzle him a good deal were he to ask at what period the French became more capable of maintaining the usual relations of peace and amity with other powers than they were at the moment when we entered into this contest. Here Mr. Fox took notice of the great difference between the Ministers of the Elector of Hanover and those of the King of Great Britain, with respect to the prudence of all powers making peace with the French Republic. He had heard it often said that the spirit of the people of this country was very great. He believed it to be so. He.

gloried in that spirit. But if the system on which this war was carried on was to be continued much longer, he had his doubts of the continuation of that spirit. A great people who saw hundreds of thousands of their fellow subjects fall, their national debt increased above one hundred and fifty millions, their credit sinking; the necessities of life becoming, by their price, almost entirely out of the reach of the labouring class; and all this merely because one man, or a few men in the country made false calculations, were not likely to preserve their old spirit. Such were the evils which the Minister had already occasioned by his false calculations. To these charges he hoped the Minister would have an opportunity of answering at the bar of the public. He knew that every man who reasoned fairly would be deeply affected by these things. Every man who thought deliberately upon the subject would mourn over the hundreds of thousands of human beings who had lost their lives in this contest, because the Minister of this country miscalculated upon the power of the French; and what, in comparison with the loss of so many human lives, was trifling, but which, in other respects, was mightily important, was the accumulation of our burdens. The national debt of this country was now above four hundred millions; he had not calculated exactly what portion of it was owing to this war altogether; still less was he able to guess what part of it was accumulated at particular periods of the war; but he was now ready to declare, what he had often declared, and still oftener felt, that he thought this war unjust in its commencement, impolitic in its progress, and he believed there was not one man of sense in this country, who had any wishes for its welfare, who did not from his heart wish it was at an end. This he was sure was the general wish of the people of this country. It was the wish even of that House, else he was strangely deceived. This brought to his mind what had been lately published by a gentleman whose talents he always admired, and for whom, notwithstanding every thing that had happened, he had still great esteem, he meant Mr. Burke; that gentleman had lately published it as his opinion, that the minority in Parliament speak the sentiments of the people of England at this hour, and that they have done so for some time past. On the subject of the war, Mr. Fox said, he had no doubt, but that the minority spoke the sentiments of the people. On the subject of the war, at least, he would maintain that to be the case; he believed it to have been so ever since the time of Robespierre; but he would defy any man to shew that this was not the wish of this country only, but also that it was not the general wish of all Europe at this hour. He would go farther, and say, that in the opinion of Europe at

large nothing had impeded the arrival of general tranquillity for a long time, but the opinion of the Ministers of this country. All this arose from the miscalculation of the right honourable gentleman; however, that very Minister now talked of peace; but let him consider on what terms we are now likely to obtain it, and compare such terms with those which we might have obtained a great while ago, and then let him endeavour to calculate the mischief which his false calculations have brought, not upon this country merely, but also on all Europe. Perhaps he might think the Cape of Good Hope an equivalent for all we had suffered. If he did, neither his humanity nor his judgement were to be envied. He was afraid; he said, that there was no question to be stated in the resolutions of this night that brought in question the propriety of lending money to the Emperor, without the consent of Parliament, and therefore he could not manifest, by his vote, his opinion upon that subject. However, when it should come before the House, he should certainly meet it with his direct negative, for it was a violent and daring attack on the British Constitution. It was essential for the House to come to a vote upon the question, Whether the Minister was to be permitted to apply money for foreign alliances without the consent of Parliament or not; and that we should know whether we are in a free country, or are mocked only with the name of freedom? He should say no more now upon this subject; he should take a future opportunity to deliver his sentiments with respect to the particular taxes.

The resolutions were then put and carried; after which the House being resumed, the report of the Committee was ordered to be received to-morrow.

Thursday, 8th December.

Mr. GREY moved, that the order for bringing Alexander Morris to the bar might be read, which was according done. He then said, that there was no question, but a breach of the privileges of that House had taken place. It was not his wish to aggravate the punishment of the individual; but he thought it became the House to vindicate their privileges, and enforce their own authority. He was of opinion that the person in custody should be committed to prison, for what length of time would be hereafter to determine. He moved that A. Morris be committed to His Majesty's goal of Newgate. Ordered.

Mr. Chancellor PITT gave notice, that his right honourable friend, Mr. Dundas, would bring forward his statement of the

finances of the East-India Company, on Monday next, also, that he should move the vote of credit on Wednesday.

Mr. GREY remarked, that the House had just inflicted a punishment upon the offence of disobeying their order: but however great the offence of Alexander Morris was, those who were the cause of his absenting himself from giving evidence before the Committee, were infinitely more culpable. He said, he would not deal in general insinuations, but proceed to state the information he had received, in order that, if true, the House might proceed in the vindication of its privileges, or, if otherwise, an end might be put to the reports which had gone abroad. Mr. Grey then stated, that the information which he had received was, that Mr. Speck, an Agent for Mr. Thellusson, and Captain Bartlett, had induced him to absent himself; and that Captain Bartlett, in particular, took Mr. Morris, in a post-chaise and four, along with him to Ireland, with that view. He had been also informed, that when Captain Bartlett, upon his return, saw Mr. Morris's wife, who expressed her concern on account of her husband's absenting himself, Captain Bartlett told her it was nothing at all; he might, it was true, be committed to Newgate, but that Mr. Thellusson would advance 500*l.* or whatever sum might be required, to defray all his expences; and farther, he was assured that Captain Bartlett had advanced money for Morris, for the purpose of keeping him out of the way.

Mr. Grey moved, "that undue practices have been used to prevent Alexander Morris from attending a Committee of that House, and that the matter of the said complaint be heard at the bar of the House."

Mr. THELLUSSON rose, and declared that, upon his honour, no such practices as had been stated, had been pursued with his knowledge; he had no communication, directly or indirectly, with Morris; with Captain Bartlett he had but a slight acquaintance; and as to what he might have said to Morris, he was totally ignorant, and could confidently assert that he had no authority from him; nor had Mr. Speck any authority whatever to tamper with Mr. Morris. Mr. Thellusson said, he thought it his duty to say thus much; farther, he did not mean to interfere in the business, nor to give his vote upon the occasion.

Mr. ANSTRUTHER said, he was uncertain whether he knew the whole extent of this complaint. It did not seem to him to amount to much more than that somebody had infringed the freedom of election; but, supposing the complaint to be in its nature ever so precise, the present appeared to him to be an improper time for the discussion of the subject. He by no means thought that

the House should not discuss the subject, and inquire into this complaint; but as a petition had been advanced against the eligibility of the Member lately returned for Southwark, a discussion of this complaint at present would be premature, and might operate in one shape or other to the prejudice of the parties interested in this election. In the case of the former petition, the House did not go into a similar inquiry, because it would prejudice the person against whom it might be determined. This was the case, when the Committee made a special report, that A. Morris had refused to obey the summons of the Committee. He thought, that the House would not do that upon the suggestion of an individual, which they refrained from doing upon a special report. It would be improper to go into this business pending the petition, because its decision might tend to the prejudice of one or other of the parties, and have an improper influence on the minds of the Committee; and as the election was soon to be tried, he saw no inconvenience from delaying the motion—He therefore should move the previous question.

Mr. GREY remarked, that the question was, that the complaint should be heard at the bar, without specification of time.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he should second the amendment, or rather he could wish that the honourable gentleman who made the motion would withdraw it. He thought it impossible that the House could go into an examination of the complaint till after the decision of the election Committee, and that it would be very improper to interfere by coming to any determination on the subject of this complaint, which might tend to prejudge the inquiry which would take place before a Committee on the merits of the election.

Mr. GREY said, it did seem to him that it would be proper to consider the subject before the Committee entered into a consideration of the petition, in order that there might be no obstacles to the procuring of proper witnesses; it was on this account that he brought forward the matter of the complaint now, in order that the petitioner might be enabled to bring before the Committee what evidence he might deem to be necessary; but he did not wish to persevere against what appeared to be the sense of the House. Before he sat down, however, he found it necessary to say, that when Mr. Thellusson declared, upon his honour, that he had had no communication with Alexander Morris; he was, for his own part, as ready to give implicit credit to that declaration as any man in the House. Mr. Thellusson, however, would do him the justice to recollect, that he had stated nothing from his own information, but

from the reports of others. He therefore would withdraw his motion, though he did not think the reasons urged against it were strong, or that the examination of the complaint now would be attended with any improper influence upon the Committee.

Mr. Grey's motion, and the motion for the previous question, were both withdrawn.

Mr. GREY stated, that it would be proper to discharge the order for the attendance of Mr. Speck and Capt. Bartlett.

The order for the attendance of Mr. Speck and Capt. Bartlett was accordingly discharged.

Sir EDWARD KNATCHBULL moved, that the special report of the Southwark Committee should be read.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, probably the honourable gentleman had some reasons for moving the reading of that report, of which he was not aware. But he trusted, upon consideration, the honourable gentleman would also withdraw his motion. He conceived it expedient upon the same grounds as the last, because the reading of the report would most probably lead to a discussion which might prejudice the petition then depending, and which it was the sense of the House ought to be avoided.

Sir E. Knatchbull withdrew his motion.

Mr. HOBART brought up the report of the Committee of Ways and Means, which were read a first time; and on the question being put for their being read a second time,

Mr. FOX rose and said: Sir, it is not my intention on this evening to enter into any detailed argument upon the resolutions. Future opportunities will occur of discussing the particulars of which they consist; and it is my earnest wish that every Member of the House may pay the most serious attention to the subject to which they belong, under a strong conviction that the greatest exertions will be necessary to put the finances of the country in a proper situation. But this is not the point to which I propose, on the present evening, to call the attention of the House. I wish them now to attend to the degraded situation to which the Commons of Great Britain stand in relation to the Executive Government of the country. It will be easily perceived that here I allude to the 1,200,000 which has been granted to the Emperor by Ministers without the consent of Parliament, a grant which I contend to be directly contrary to positive laws, and a flagrant violation of the constitution of Parliament. I certainly would have expected, that since the right honourable gentleman did not think it worth his while to apply to the House of Commons before he advanced such a sum to a foreign power, that when he informed them of the cir-

cumstances, he would have accompanied it with some explanation. But from the mode in which the money was given, as well as from the speech of the Minister in opening the budget, I evidently perceive that the whole affair has been conducted, not for the convenience of Ministers, or the advantage which they might imagine would result from it, (though, God knows, this would have been bad enough,) but that it has been done for the purpose of setting a precedent in the annals of the Constitution, from which the public money is to be understood as lying at the disposal, not of the Representatives of the People, but of the Ministers of the Crown. When I went home last night and reflected upon the various subjects which had passed under discussion, I must confess that I felt hurt at the idea of having appeared to give my assent, at least at not having positively dissented, from resolutions which appeared to me so extremely unconstitutional. I considered myself as having been guilty of a neglect of duty, and as called upon by the relations in which I stand to my constituents, and to the country, to come forward this day and enter my solemn protest against a measure which I regard as an infringement of the rights of the People, and of the privileges of this House: for I should look upon myself as a traitor to the public were I to vote one shilling, or one man, for the service of the Crown, without the consent of Parliament. We have been in the practice of hearing, for some time past, very warm and elaborate eulogiums upon the constitution of the country, notwithstanding all the wounds which it has lately received; and I always thought, that whatever differences of opinion might subsist upon some points, there were others on which we were all agreed. Though we might differ in sentiments respecting the preponderance of power in one branch of the Constitution over another, and in affixing precise limits to each, I thought and believed that there was no man who would maintain that it was right and proper for the executive power to usurp the legislative power; or, that it was just and lawful for the Crown to supersede the office of Parliament. But let us consider the nature of the transaction before us:—Had Ministers, when Parliament was not sitting, found themselves called upon by an imperious sense of duty, dictated by a combination of urgent and unforeseen circumstances, to grant a certain pecuniary aid to the Emperor; and had they taken the earliest opportunity, upon the meeting of Parliament, to submit the whole of the business to their consideration, then would have been the time for the House to pass a decision upon their conduct, upon a candid and impartial review of the situation in which they were placed, and the motives by which it was fair to suppose them to have been actuated.

But the present case is wholly different. In the course of the last three months of the last Parliament repeated applications were made them respecting their intentions of granting or withholding pecuniary assistance to the Emperor ; and, from the silence which they persevered in preserving on the occasion, it was natural to infer that they would not grant such assistance without the previous concurrence of Parliament. In fact, however, we find that a great part of the money given to his Imperial Majesty has been granted without that concurrence, not during the parliamentary recess, but when Parliament was actually sitting. If Parliament had not been sitting, and Ministers had thought it prudent to grant pecuniary assistance to the Emperor, I say it ought to have been assembled for the purpose of deliberating upon it ; but when Parliament was sitting, in God's name why was not proper application made to the House ? Was it because Ministers were afraid that the House wanted confidence in them ? The whole course of their experience taught them the contrary. No : it was because the right honourable gentleman thought himself better qualified to judge of the propriety of the time, and the extent of such assistance, than the House of Commons. I shall not dispute with him at present, whether he was or not. The Constitution says, he was not, and under this authority he was bound to act. The Constitution says, that the public money is at the disposal, not of the Crown, but of Parliament, and therefore he had no right to dispose of such a sum without the consent of Parliament. I do not argue the point of his superior knowledge, or his superior wisdom ; I think it fairer to stand upon authority ; and when the Constitution speaks precisely, as it does upon this point, he, nor no other man, has a right to resist its will. The question now is, not whether the Constitution be good or bad, whether this be a wise or unwise arrangement ; it has its advantages, and it, no doubt, may have its inconveniencies ; but it was his duty, as the minister of a free constitution, to adhere to the principles which it has laid down, and to the rules which it has prescribed ; the first and most important of which is, that the disposal of the public money is vested, not in the King, but in the People. When he violated the fundamental principle, and infringed this sacred law, what else can I infer than a desire to establish a precedent against the Constitution. The circumstances which have accompanied the transaction justify the inference which I draw. I find from the accounts upon the table, that a considerable part of the sum was issued in November last ; how then does the matter stand ? Ministers finding themselves called upon to lend pecuniary aid to the Emperor during the recess, the measure, in-

stead of being laid before the Parliament immediately upon its meeting, was studiously concealed for the purpose of holding out as a precedent in the history of the country to be made known to Great Britain and to the world, that the disposal of the public money is no longer in the hands of the House of Commons, but that it is in the hands of the Crown. We heard something like an apology yesterday from the right honourable gentleman, which, to me, appeared as unsatisfactory as the conduct which it was brought forward to justify is unconstitutional. It consisted of two parts: In the first place, that Parliament was not so good a judge of the amount of the assistance to be granted to the Emperor as the right honourable gentleman; and, secondly, that from the discussions to which the publicity of the transaction would lead, considerable mischief might have taken place. With respect to the first, it takes the point at issue for granted, by supposing that an absolute is preferable to a limited Monarchy, and that our free Constitution would be much better were it transformed into a despotism. As to the danger to be apprehended from the publicity of the transaction, the pretence may be used upon other occasions as well as upon this, till at last we come to the old exploded argument, that the money of the people ought to be vested with the King's Ministers, and not with their own representatives. In short, the right honourable gentleman tells you he did not think it worth while to acknowledge you at all in the matter, because you were neither fit judges of the propriety of the quantum, nor of the period for granting the money. He takes care, however, that you shall finally be informed of it; but when? When it comes to be paid. Let us see also from what fund this loan has been raised. One part of it has been raised upon vote of credit, and another part has been taken from the money voted for paying the extraordinaries of the year, and of course certain services of which Parliament approved, and for which it made provision, remain unpaid. In what situation then is the House of Commons placed? if they refuse to make good a debt, which I hope and trust they will, a part of the public service will remain in arrears. They are reduced therefore to this dilemma, either to discharge a debt, in contracting which they were not acknowledged, and for which they are not responsible, or by refusing to discharge it, to leave services which were sanctioned by their approbation unpaid. When we look back, Sir, one cannot help observing a peculiar train of proceeding—for the first time the budget was opened this season before the extraordinaries of the army were voted. I know the reason that is given for it is, that the budget was opened uncommonly early in the season. I would re-

mind the House, however, that it was opened last year on the 7th of December as well as this year, (with this difference, that last year Parliament had not been so long convened) ; and yet the extraordinaries of the army were voted previous to the opening of the budget. This season the account was not so much as produced till the day of the opening of the budget, more strongly to mark the precedent ; and that it may be said in future times, that in 1796 the Minister of the Country, after having, of his own accord, granted a loan to the Emperor without the consent of Parliament, did not deign even to inform them of it upon their meeting ; nay, that he had kept back the account of the extraordinaries of the year, lest the House of Commons, by sanctioning or conniving at the measure, might in the least have weakened the precedent. When I am upon this subject, I cannot refrain from remarking also, that last night, for the first time, we heard that the country was at war with Spain. Those gentlemen who are in the habit of reading the papers, must have seen it is some months since it was openly declared, that letters of marque have been issued, and that it has been announced by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland ; in short, it is only in their capacity as Members of Parliament that they did not know it till last night. I am aware that this may be defended upon the score of right, and that the prerogative of declaring war is vested in the Crown. But how far it is gracious not to announce the exercise of that right to the House of Commons, is another question, especially when it is recollected that the Ministers of the Crown are so little scrupulous about entrenching upon the rights of the people. To return, however, to the subject of discussion. Were I to put the question to any man at all acquainted with the constitution of the country ; when expences are to be incurred, who are the best judges of the propriety of incurring them ? He would answer, the Commons of Great Britain. And were I to add, when the propriety of incurring certain expences is decided, who are the best judges of the extent to which they ought to be incurred ? He would not hesitate also to reply, the Commons of Great Britain. When we give up these two strong holds, the Constitution is lost. What, then, are we to think of the Minister who wrests them out of our possession ? or what will be said by future historians of that Parliament which tamely gave them up without one syllable of remonstrance, or one threat of defiance ? It is true that the House have so far relaxed from the rigorous exercise of their privilege as to give a vote of credit to the Minister that he may be enabled to meet unforeseen emergencies. This, however, was always to a limited extent ; but in the present instance the right

honourable gentleman thought that we were as little qualified to judge of the extent of the assistance to be given to the Emperor as of the propriety of giving it. He cannot surely pretend, that by twisting any vote of the last Parliament he was at liberty to send pecuniary succours to the Emperor. Notwithstanding the obsequiousness of that Parliament, notwithstanding all the wounds which it gave the Constitution, and notwithstanding all the evils which it has intailed upon the Country, I much doubt whether it would have sanctioned a proposal for giving another loan to the Emperor. But with regard to this Parliament, I hope that it will vindicate its own dignity and importance at the outset, and shew the Ministers of the Country, that if they be advisers of the measures of the Crown, the House of Commons are the guardians of the public purse. But if, on the other hand, they patiently acquiesce in the most daring encroachments upon their rights, what figure will they make in history, or how will they answer to their Country for those liberties which they wantonly sacrifice at the shrine of unprincipled ambition? The right honourable gentleman last night expressed a hope that Parliament would continue their confidence; but I hope he did not mean by this that they will allow him to go on disposing of the property of the country without their consent; or if he does, I hope that in this, at least, they will disappoint his expectations. On the present evening I shall think it my duty to take the sense of the House upon every question, whether of supply or of ways and means; and if I succeed, I shall move on an early day that His Majesty's Ministers, in granting a Loan to the Emperor without the consent of Parliament, have been guilty of a high crime and misdemeanor. If, however, the House shall not think proper to agree with me on this evening, I shall defer that motion, conceiving that it would not be attended with success. I hope, however, that in this case the subject will be taken up out of doors, that the people will, in every part of the country, express their abhorrence of the doctrine last night delivered by the right honourable gentleman, and that the House of Commons will be obliged (I do not mean by force, but by the voice of the country) to assert those rights which they have tamely and pusillanimously surrendered. For my own part, I consider this as a more serious attack upon the Constitution of the country, than what was conveyed through the writings of Pain, or of any man whatever. The nature of a libel is explained by its tendency, to bring into hatred and contempt the Constitution. Were I, said Mr. Fox, upon a Jury, deciding upon any composition containing the speech of the right honourable gentleman last night, I would not hesitate a moment to pronounce it a libel upon

the Constitution : for if the doctrines laid down in it are Constitutional, ours is a most vile and detestable Constitution. Even after all the attacks which have been made upon it, and all the wounds which it has received, we would have still shed our blood in its defence ; but, if this new defalcation is to be added to what we were formerly robbed of, I would wish to know what there is left to interest our feelings, or to stimulate our exertions ? This will, indeed, be an incalculable addition to all the woes and calamities which the war has induced ; and if, after what we have lost in money, in reputation, and in blood, we are also to submit to this oppression, the House of Commons is no longer to be considered as a branch of the Constitution ; and there will be little in our Government to distinguish it from that of absolute Monarchies.

Mr. Chancellor PITT. Those who never before had an opportunity to hear the speeches which the right honourable gentleman has been accustomed to pronounce, and of observing the line of argument which he has been accustomed to employ upon every public question which has been agitated in this House, would certainly have supposed, upon the present occasion, that this day, for the first time in his life, the right honourable gentleman had felt real alarm for the liberties and Constitution of his country, and for the first time a point had occurred so intimately connected with the preservation of their political rights, that in the event of a decision hostile to the opinion which he holds, it is to be vindicated by nothing less than an appeal to the people. But it has happened to those who have often had occasion to attend to the right honourable gentleman, to have heard the same danger represented, and the same consequences applied. It is not once, twice, or three times that the right honourable gentleman has reprobated with the same emphasis, stigmatised with the same epithets, and denounced as pregnant with ruin to the liberties of the country—measures which it has been thought necessary to bring forward, and which the wisdom of Parliament has thought proper to adopt ; nor is it now the first time that the right honourable gentleman and those who sat near him have made a stand behind the last dike of the Constitution. It is not the first, the second, nor the third time, I repeat, that upon points which a great majority of the House and of the Country deemed to be connected with the preservation of their dearest interest, the right honourable gentleman has raised the cry of alarm, and has affected to see the downfall of the Constitution, and the destruction of our liberties. Not many months even have elapsed since the right honourable gentleman stated with the same confidence, and urged with the same fervour, that the liberties of England were

annihilated, and its Constitution gone, if certain bills then pending passed into law, laws under which, I will venture to affirm, that a vast majority of the people of this country agree that the substantial blessings of their free government have been preserved, and the designs of our real enemies have hitherto been frustrated. Nay, not many hours have elapsed since the right honourable gentleman gave a two month's notice of his intention to move the repeal of those acts which he once represented as a grievance under which he could not sleep. There is, indeed, something striking, something peculiarly singular, in the manner in which the new constitutional light has broken in upon the right honourable gentleman. This declaration of mind, which has infused so deadly an alarm into the mind of the right honourable gentleman, this declaration by which the Constitution is annihilated, was made yesterday! This declaration is admitted to have been made in a way the most clear and distinct, indeed so clear as to magnify the danger, and to aggravate the offence. This declaration, which he now feels to be so fatal to the liberties of the country, so repugnant to the principles of the Constitution, as to render it incumbent upon him to make the ground of an extraordinary proceeding, and the reason of signal animadversion against me, did not yesterday strike him as of so much importance as immediately to call him up! It did not inspire with any particular sensation his honourable friend near him (Mr. Grey), a gentleman by nature not free from jealousy, and of a vigilance which it was not easy to elude—it had not however drawn from him the smallest remark of any kind that could expose the danger with which it was pregnant. It never disturbed the serenity of his temper, though perhaps not the least liable to irritation, nor had it prevented him from laying before the House the details of his various calculations with the most calm and placid equanimity, the very moment after he had witnessed the death-wound of the Constitution! After an interval of debate, it had deranged none of the calculations of the right honourable gentleman, it had not driven out of his head his reasonings of the three per cents. his remarks upon the navy debt, nor a single circumstance of objection which the survey of the subject had presented, nor had it deterred him from allowing the resolutions to be carried with a unanimous vote. But after the right honourable gentleman had slept upon this subject, he discovers that the speech which he yesterday heard with so much indifference, contains principles of such dreadful tendency, and threatens consequences of such fatal operation, as to lead him to propose not merely a censure of the doctrines, not the reprobation of the particular measure, not merely the punishment of the person by whom it was uttered,

but which would induce him in the first instance to take revenge for the error or the guilt of a Minister, by giving his negative to the whole resolutions, which have no relation to the particular measure in question ; which would prompt him to suspend those supplies which are calculated to give confidence to the negotiations for peace ; or in case of being reduced to that alternative, energy to the operations of war ; that would induce him to tell the enemy by the very next post, by which the unanimous determination of Parliament to provide for every situation is conveyed, that the House of Commons had interfered to stop the effect of their former decision, had suspended the means that were to add weight to the exertions of the Executive Government, and at so critical a moment of the negotiation had committed the interests of this country and her allies, and flattered the hopes and raised the pretensions of the enemy. Such is the length to which the proposition of the right honourable gentleman goes. It is not to remedy the imputed crime which has been committed, nor to guard against the chance of its occurring in future, but it is calculated to derange every measure which may be in train, and to disappoint every design that may be in contemplation. I cannot, however, but hope, that when the right honourable gentleman has viewed the subject with more consideration, when he has again slept upon his wrath, he will recur to that coolness which he first experienced, and that his vehemence and his alarm will subside. But whether the right honourable gentleman is to be deterred by the prospect of the dangers which must arise from the measure which he proposes, at least I cannot doubt that consideration will have its just weight with the House. The right honourable gentleman says, that if he succeeds in his present motion, he will move the House against His Majesty's Ministers for the part they have acted upon this occasion. There is one thing that I will intreat of the right honourable gentleman, and he may be assured it is the only supplication that I will address to him upon this subject ; and it is, that if he can prove to the House that I have violated the Constitution, and committed the crime of which he accuses me, he will not defer a single moment to take the step which he has threatened ; that he will confine his efforts to that object, and that he will not combine with the vengeance he pursues, a measure that involves the ruin of his country. Let the punishment destined for Ministers light upon them alone, and let the consequences of the measures which they employed, to avert the dangers which threatened their country, the measures which they adopted for its safety, for the salvation of Europe, rest upon themselves. This much I address to the right honourable gentleman, not for personal considerations,

nor do I intreat the boon as a matter of personal indulgence. If it be refused by him, I hope at least that the House will be actuated by more moderate feelings, and guided by wiser maxims. The rest of the right honourable gentleman's propositions, and the point of his observations, are so exclusively confined to myself, that I am at a loss in what way to proceed, or whether I ought to trespass upon the House with any remarks upon them, since the subject is intended for a more full discussion. I cannot, however, refrain from exposing the strange and extraordinary misrepresentations which the right honourable gentleman has given of the general question upon which he builds the conclusion of criminality; and I cannot doubt, that when the House perceives the foundation upon which the accusation is raised, they will be able to judge of the effect that ought to be given to the others with which it was vested in the House of Commons. The right honourable gentleman stated the general principle which constituted the chief security of our liberties—the power of controuling the public expenditure—and I hope there is little difference of opinion upon this subject. The right honourable gentleman says, that if there is one thing sure in the constitution, it is this; and if it be violated, he maintains that the people still possess the means of obtaining redress. After the representations which the House have heard upon the dilapidations which the Constitution has suffered, and the invasions committed upon the public liberties, they may judge of the reality of the danger which is now threatened, when it is even now admitted that resources still are left by which it may be opposed. Although the general principle which the right honourable gentleman states as the essence of the freedom of the Constitution be admitted, it cannot be disputed that it is subject to limitation. At every period since the commencement of those periods to which we refer for the pure practice of the Constitution; in the best and most glorious æras in the history of our government, the principle of extraordinaries has been received, not merely for individual expences, but recognized upon general views. It has prevailed under every Administration, even those with which the right honourable gentleman was connected; during the three last reigns, and in the most approved periods of liberty and constitutional policy. The right honourable gentleman then holds this principle without exception, while the practice of every government proves that it has been always limited, and his whole argument is applicable to all the extraordinaries that ever were voted by Parliament. It is impossible, therefore that the right honourable gentleman could have correctly stated—I can hardly believe that he has sincerely stated—this argument, which his experience must dis-

avow, and his knowledge must inform him is neither consistent with the principles of the Constitution, nor with its practice at periods which deserve to be followed as examples. But though I am here arguing upon general points, the question in reality comes within a narrower compass. The right honourable gentleman chuses to overlook in one instance what he alludes to in another part of his speech. Did it never occur to him that Parliament had sometimes committed to His Majesty, not new, but special powers, which superseded all general questions? In reality this discretionary power is expressly committed to His Majesty. Before I sit down, I intend to move that His Majesty's message of the 8th of December last year should be read, and likewise the act, granting a vote of credit. From this it will appear that a power was given to His Majesty to apply the sum contained in the vote of credit as the exigencies of the State might require. Suppose the case, which will not be a less suitable illustration, because it approaches the fact, that powers had been conferred to give that assistance to the allies of this country, which our own interest and the circumstances of the situation required; can any man doubt that the Minister, who should have hesitated to issue that sum, which, granted, might have enabled our allies to maintain their own cause, and to defend the safety of Europe, and who should have allowed the enemies of Austria to complete her destruction by withholding a seasonable supply, would have been a traitor to his country, and would have merited the severest punishment? The vote of credit last year does actually invest the Executive Government with a discretionary power of applying the sums granted in a manner that best might suit the public exigencies, and the money applied to the service of the Emperor is within the amount of the grant. I do not mean to say that the discretion thus vested in the Crown is absolute and independent of the control of Parliament, or that the Minister who exercises it in an improper manner is exempted from censure; but in what manner I understand this limitation, I will state when I am called upon to make my defence. Whatever be the issue of this discussion, I cannot forbear observing, even at the risk of incurring the imputation of arrogance, that I would rather be convicted of having acted a principal part in the measure of granting a supply by which the salvation of Austria was secured, and the independence of Europe was maintained, than be acquitted for withholding that aid, by which the cause of our allies was sacrificed, and the general interests of mankind compromised. At present, however, the question is not, Whether the conduct of His Majesty's Ministers were proper or improper; whether they were intitled to praise or deserving of

punishment. The House have now to determine, Whether they shall announce to France that the supplies of the year are to be stopped, and the exertions of the Executive Power suspended? Whether at a moment of such critical importance we are to be reduced to the unhappy situation when we can neither prosecute the negotiation with that confidence which is calculated to insure a favourable issue, nor prepare for war with an energy which can afford the prospect of success to our exertions? [The message of the 8th of December last year, and the words of the act granting the vote of credit, were read at the table.]

Mr. Fox stated in explanation, that he had only said that extraordinary measures were in some measure inevitable, but were an evil that ought not to be extended beyond the necessity, and that it was criminal to resort to this expedient when other means might be employed.

Sir WILLIAM POULTENEY declared that it was with much concern and astonishment he heard on the preceding evening, that the Minister had taken upon him to appropriate so large a sum of the public money, without the consent of Parliament; and this sentiment he knew himself to be impressed with in common with many other gentlemen. He was, therefore, very well pleased to find that subject renewed upon the present occasion. The discussion that was now brought forward was represented on the other side of the House, as if it were only a cry set up by persons anxious to arraign the conduct of His Majesty's Ministers, and excite in the people an alarm for the safety of the Constitution. This defence would not do. The control of the House of Commons over the public purse of the country, was the main point upon which rested the whole of the Constitution of Great Britain; and though Mr. Fox might be accustomed to hold strong language in cases comparatively ordinary, yet this was one which every gentleman must feel to be of the very last importance. The justification offered by the right honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer to this very serious charge, was chiefly grounded upon two arguments, drawn from the words in which the vote of credit was expressed: First, that it was meant to defray the extraordinary expences of the year. Undoubtedly it was, and unfortunately it happened that extraordinary measures and a vote of credit must be granted in every year of a war. But surely it never was intended that subsidies to foreign powers should be supplied by a vote of credit. New circumstances might doubtless occur to render it proper for Ministers to exercise their discretion; but here the circumstances were foreseen, and have been laid before Parliament. The discovery that this sum had been advanced,

came out in a very suspicious manner indeed. It could no longer be concealed. There seemed to have been a desire of concealing the fact as long as possible, and a disclosure was only compelled by necessity. He could not, however, go the length of stopping the supplies, though he was of opinion that a very strong mark of censure ought to be inflicted by the House. The right honourable gentleman said, that there were qualifications to the general principle, and that Ministers were allowed to exercise their discretion. It must be confessed, that circumstances may arise when Government was perfectly justifiable in remitting supplies abroad, for services beneficial to this country; and when such a measure was adopted by the present Minister some years since in his interference with regard to Holland, that conduct received his most hearty approbation. This present case, however, was of a very different description; and by neglecting to consult Parliament at a time when it was sitting on the expenditure of the public money, the Minister appeared to set himself above their control, and be indifferent as to their approbation. As to the influence a parliamentary sanction to this measure might have had upon public credit at an earlier period, he thought it too trifling a consideration to weigh against the fundamental principles of the Constitution; and with regard to the credit which the Minister assumed for acting advantageously when he concealed from the enemy the intention of affording supplies to our ally, as well as their extent and the time of their being remitted, he considered that concealment as having a very different effect; for it was clear to him that it was in a great measure on the supposition and assurance that this country refused all pecuniary supplies to the Emperor, that the French felt themselves emboldened to make redoubled efforts, and advance so far into the heart of Germany. The right honourable gentleman asked, whether, in order to pass a previous censure on this conduct, the House would adopt the proposition of Mr. Fox, and in this critical emergency stop the supplies of the nation? It was this dilemma which in his mind, aggravated the misconduct of the Minister, who put the House in that situation, that it must either acquiesce in an expenditure made in so blameable a manner, or bring danger on the country by stopping the supplies, and afford some room for a charge against the national faith. Upon the whole, he trusted that this proceeding would not pass the House of Commons without receiving some strong marks of its disapprobation. He was very glad that the subject had been brought forward in the way it had been done, and he hoped that the House would never witness in future a similar violation of the principles of the Constitution. The immense navy

debt which had been contracted, in his opinion, 'proved great mismanagement and want of foresight in that department. It appeared that great abuses prevailed in the transport service ; and the House ought seriously to inquire into the causes which had occasioned the shameful prodigality which had been observed, and endeavour to provide a remedy.

Mr. GREY said, that, after the sound constitutional speech of the honourable Baronet, he would not have troubled the House upon the present occasion, had he not felt himself called upon by the importance of the question itself, and personally by the observations of the right honourable gentleman. He had been accused of want of fairness in taking notice last night of the circumstance which he now felt so strongly. The truth was, that he often found that he omitted what he intended to say ; and, in this view, he had often occasion for the indulgence of the House. But the right honourable gentleman must recollect, from what had passed last session of Parliament, that he was not less sensibly alive to the question of the Imperial advances ; for then he had pledged himself, that if the Minister dared, in contempt of the privileges of the House, and in violation of the Constitution, to advance any sums to the Emperor, he would bring forward the accusation against him, as he hoped would now be done. The right honourable gentleman said, that this was not the first, second, or third time, that he and his friends had seen the ruin of public liberty in every measure of Administration ; but this was not the tenth time they had seen the Constitution attacked by the desperate measures of the right honourable gentleman. Had the House sooner perceived the danger which threatened the Constitution, the present measure would never have been attempted ; and if their obsequiousness and servility had not encouraged the design of Ministers, they never would have seen this bold and daring invasion of their rights. When at last, however, they were sensible of the danger, if the outrage was not expiated by the punishment of the right honourable gentleman, he would maintain that there no longer was any Constitution in England. How must the astonishment and indignation of the House be increased, when they found, that when Parliament was sitting, when the embarrassment Government felt for money was so great, these advances had been made ? At the very time, when he had asked the right honourable gentleman what he intended as to an Austrian loan, very considerable advances had at that time been made, and only 77,000*l.* had been given during the recess of Parliament. Such was the fact, however, as was proved by the dates in the account on the table. Without taking

any foolish credit for the vigilance imputed to him ironically by the right honourable gentleman, he was convinced, that even still the army extraordinaries would not have been presented, had it not been in consequence of the questions he had proposed to Ministers on this point. Indeed the whole system of the right honourable gentleman indicated a desire to conceal this matter as long as possible. I am aware, continued Mr. Grey, that the right honourable gentleman will rest his defence on the general principle of army extraordinaries: that he will tell us a case of real exigency, is a case that must and ought to supersede the inferior demands of economical, or even legislative prudence. But let me tell that gentleman, that no financial exigency can be paramount to the Constitution. That no duty is so sacred as the maintenance of it. True, its most vital parts have been attacked, and their vigour essentially crippled and destroyed. But it is nevertheless incumbent on the real friends of order, to uphold what remains of it, and struggle for the restoration of such of its fundamental, elementary attributes, as have been either subverted or abused. The existence of the Constitution, in fact, depends on the vigilance and attention bestowed by a discerning House of Commons on the acts of Ministers. Such a House of Commons will not be satisfied, on great constitutional questions, with pompous declamatory denunciations of the opposers of ministerial arrogance, of the foes of ministerial profusion. It will not be satisfied with retrospective and unconstitutional measures of any kind; but will in every situation evince, by the conduct of its Members, that there still is a barrier to incroachments, a line beyond which not even His Majesty's Ministers can extend their predatory efforts. In the present case, it cannot for a moment be argued, that it was not the duty of Ministers to come to Parliament with a specific proposition, soliciting the advice and concurrence of the Representatives of the People, before the money of the People was applied, in a way that must subject them to be assessed with new and extraordinary burdens. That the public money was thus applied, is evident. That the Constitution was infringed, is equally so. But the right honourable gentleman will tell us, that granting our principle to be a fundamental principle of the Constitution, there yet is an exception to that, as well as to all general rules. He, indeed, has told us, that the sum advanced to the Emperor was advanced under circumstances, and at a time when it was necessary that the exception should be adopted. Thus he takes the exception, and argues from the necessity of the case. We might, in the same way, at once give an unlimited vote of credit to Ministers. Perhaps the right honourable gentleman will next tell us, that any

account of the disbursement of the army extraordinaries might thus be avoided. So it might. There was, however, a time when the right honourable gentleman would have called such an exception, as he has this night adopted, paltry; a time when he was an enthusiast in the cause of liberty, an economist, and a reformer. In the year 1782 this circumstance of extraordinaries would, by the right honourable gentleman, be spoken of and reprobated as an evil which could not be too jealously watched, as an infringement ever to be resisted, as a principle that could not be too severely reprobated. These avowedly were then his sentiments of that species of ministerial chicanery; insomuch, that immediately after he was made Minister, the House was called upon, by a speech from the Throne, to watch with jealousy, and repel with dignity, every such attempt to dilapidate and infringe the Constitution. The extraordinaries being thus formally and solemnly made the subject of a speech from the Throne, it is not a little remarkable that the Minister himself has adopted the exception, instead of the principle. It is the right honourable gentleman who has speciously frittered away the laws, who has attempted, by a sort of special pleading, to deprive us of our liberties. A certain sum under the authority of an act of Parliament was given to His Majesty for the service of the year 1776. The application of this sum was restricted to certain purposes. It was to be applied in such a way as the exigencies of affairs might require; but it was meant prospectively, not retrospectively. I can prove to the House that the sum then granted has been used retrospectively, instead of prospectively. On the 31st of December, 1795, 150,000*l.* was given to Colonel Craufurd. I am certain the right honourable gentleman is abstractedly of opinion, that any appropriation, such as he has made of that vote of credit, is an unconstitutional appropriation. Not, indeed, do I think that the last Parliament, servile and obsequious as it was; that Parliament, which took more from the liberties of the people than any Parliament that ever existed! No; that Parliament could not have intended, could not have considered that vote of credit as conveying unlimited power to Ministers. If there were now in the House any gentlemen who were Members of that Parliament, Mr. Grey said that he would ask them, whether, if the right honourable gentleman had, at the time that vote was passed, stated to them that it conveyed a power to His Majesty's Ministers to give two millions and a half at their discretion, as a subsidy to the Emperor, they would have agreed to put such extraordinary power into the hands of the Executive Government? Much pain, and many apprehensions, had arisen, from the fear of a threatened invasion: for he

would venture to say, that no invasion or attack that could take place, would go decidedly to the destruction of all that was valuable, namely, the Liberty of the Country, as such a power, if lodged in the hands of Ministers.

Viewing the subject in this light, he thought it his duty to oppose, or at least suspend the supplies; and thinking so, he would not be deterred by any invidious construction which might be put upon it. It was asked, Were the supplies to be suspended; the supplies, the possession of which would afford to Government so much weight and vigour? He would answer, yes; and he was sure we would not negotiate less favourably if the French saw that the House was determined to maintain its rights. The firmness with which they asserted their own dignity, would be a pledge of the spirit with which they would resent the insults of the enemy. Assuming that exalted situation on which a free people ought to stand, they would negotiate more advantageously with a free people; a people that he hoped would remain free; a people whom the right honourable gentleman considered capable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity, who had "snorted away the indigested fumes of the blood of their Sovereign," and with whom the right honourable gentleman deigned to negotiate. In this manner they would act worthy of a free people; and even in the view of policy, this was the conduct to be pursued. But, in reality, the proposition did not go to negative the supplies: it was intended to postpone them for the present, and suspend them till the wound given to the Constitution was made whole. He therefore, with leave of his right honourable friend, would move an amendment, "That the second reading should be put off till to-morrow;" and if the House agreed, he would to-morrow move the House to resolve, that in making these advances without the consent of Parliament, the Minister had been guilty of a high crime and misdemeanor.

Mr. WILBERFORCE said, he was averse to postponing the passing of the resolution, even to to-morrow, on the score of propriety and policy, but more particularly when he recollected the essential difference there was in the manner in which the business appeared to gentlemen yesterday and to-day, and the great difference that might possibly take place in their opinions before to-morrow; for notwithstanding what had fallen from the honourable Baronet, he could not conceive that the question which had been suggested, and stated by the trembling fears for the Constitution, expressed by the honourable gentlemen on the other side, had any thing at all to do, or should be permitted to encumber or impede for a moment the very important and necessary, and now more than ever important

and necessary, business of supply. He said, he felt it to be his duty to set the honourable Baronet right on a subject in which he had fallen into an error, rather inconsistent with his usual candour. His right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had by no means left the matter of the subsidy to the Emperor to repose: on the contrary, he had, in his speech of yesterday, avowed that he had mentioned the matter then as a necessary part of the financial statement; and that he did not mean to rest his justification of the measure there, but would reserve it to be the subject of future discussion. This having been the real statement of his right honourable friend, he thought the honourable Baronet, in stating the matter as he had done, and in drawing inferences from that statement, had not treated his right honourable friend with candour.

I do not (continued Mr. Wilberforce) accuse the honourable gentlemen of Opposition with want of candour; their candour has not, for a long time, been a subject of contemplation with me. I expect justice from all—candour from a friend. I will not say what that is, which I expect from the gentlemen of Opposition; but I will say what I do not expect from them—I do not expect candour. The honourable Baronet who was in the habits of friendship with my right honourable friend, understands me. I leave it to himself, whether as a friend he has treated him with candour, or even with justice, in making the statement which the House has just heard.

The nature of the vote of credit had not been sufficiently commented upon: on attentive perusal, it would be found to convey an impression that Ministers were authorized in employing the whole, or any part of the sum provided by it, in such manner, or on such measures as the exigencies of the State might require: this construction was so literally obvious on the face of the bill, that it could not be contested. Upon this, then, a question arose, whether the mode in which Ministers had applied the money was, or was not, necessary to the success of the cause in which the nation was embarked. Having stated the question thus, and put the subject on its proper bottom, he would, without considering or imitating the honourable gentlemen opposite, who seemed to have their intermittents of opinion, their hot and cold fits, declare, that if there was no necessity for applying the money in the way in which it had been advanced, he would be found not among the last to censure the conduct of Ministers. But every one who would determine impartially, must recollect the peculiar circumstances attending the time in which it was advanced; the state of public credit, and the state of our allies; and striking a just balance between the caution

to be observed with the one, and the attention due to the necessities of the other, make a just allowance for the Difficulties under which Ministers were obliged to act, and decide, if not with liberality, at least with justice. It would remain for the wisdom of the House to consider, that if the Minister thought it necessary to supply our ally the Emperor, in his very critical situation (a situation in which our own fate and that of Europe was deeply involved) with a large sum, the effect such a remittance would have had upon the funds prevented him from doing so. He had to adjust the balance of public credit, venturing something, but not so much as to occasion material injury. And acting with the consciousness of rectitude, it was natural for him to trust to the Parliament of a free and liberal Nation, to protect him from those who in all cases would ascribe every action of his to the very worst of motives.

The question was, how far his right honourable friend had acted right? and in this the event justified him. It appeared from the manner in which the money was issued, and the disproportion the whole of it bore to the sum originally intended, that he was swayed by the motives of caution, and by a consideration of the necessity, to accommodate himself to the circumstances of the times. As to the effect that his conduct had produced, it was obvious to every man. Who was there acquainted with commercial affairs, who would not say that the state of public credit was much worse then than it is at present? Every symptom of weakness at such a crisis would have been dangerous. The gentlemen on the other side of the House had spoken of the good effect which any opposition to the supplies would have with respect to the negotiations on the Continent, by displaying the spirit, vigour, and energy of a free people; but he suspected the principal encouragement which could be given to those negotiations, would be by facilitating the provisions of the year, and enabling Ministers to carry their plans into execution. As a proof of this opinion, he asked them whether they did not think that the flourishing state of our finances had produced that happy change in the language and behaviour of the Directory to Lord Malmesbury. If any assistance had been given publicly to the Emperor, would it not have been injurious to the public credit of this country? For his own part, he again confessed he felt the measure not only justifiable, but deserving of praise instead of censure. To satisfy the House, however, that his conclusions were well warranted, and that a vote of credit was applicable to any purpose which involved our safety and prosperity, he desired to have the act of Parliament of December, 1795, by which the vote of credit was granted, read. This being done, he

contended that the words "which the exigency of the circumstances may require," were meant to convey such a construction as he gave them. But it was said, that this was a mortal blow to the Constitution; so he had heard upon many former occasions, and yet the very persons who then pronounced its death, tacitly admit its existence or its renovation, by declaring this to be its final shock. If the Constitution was actually in danger, as an honourable Baronet had declared, he thought it would be better to have that danger distinctly discussed, instead of pouring forth vehement declamations.

Mr. YORKE thought the present question the most important of any he had ever heard discussed since he had had the honour of a seat in Parliament. He wished that gentlemen, however, would discuss it with temper; for if ever there was a time since the Revolution when partial affections and party interests ought to be abandoned, the present was that time. An honourable gentleman had been lavish of reproach upon the last Parliament; he supposed it was perfectly consistent with the rules of the House, for one Parliament to abuse another; but as a Member of that Parliament, he conceived he had a right, in vindication of himself, to say, that however servile and obsequious that Parliament might be called, he did not know that he had shewn a greater degree of servility, or betrayed a want of proper spirit, when it was necessary to do otherwise, more than any Member of the present Parliament. To revert to the subject, however, more immediately under consideration, he had to remark, that the gentlemen who had spoken upon it appeared to him in general to have departed from the question. The question before the House was merely, whether the resolutions of the Committee of Ways and Means should be agreed to by the House, for the assistance given to the Emperor was out of a sum of money granted by a vote of credit to defray any extraordinary expenses of the army that might accrue; and as the extraordinaries of the army were not yet voted, it was consequently a separate consideration. Yet an honourable gentleman had proposed to negative this question, on the principle that the money granted by the vote of credit in a former year was misapplied, and thereby postpone the supplies necessary for the service of the present year. Such a delay in the provision of the supplies, he conceived, might be of dangerous consequence; for gentlemen were to recollect, that we were still involved in a dangerous war, and at the most critical period of the most critical negotiation. He should propose, therefore, to have the resolutions of the Committee of Ways and Means immediately received; for it was certainly important that the

money should be granted as soon as possible. The other question, respecting the application of the money granted by the vote of credit, might deserve consideration when it came to be discussed separately, and that was all he wished. In regard to his opinion of the application of the money granted by the vote of credit, he knew no law nor precedent why a part of it should not be sent to the Emperor, any more than why it should not be sent to St. Domingo or Toulon, if the exigency of the case required. The question then to be considered was, whether the exigency of the circumstances did require it, and upon that he entertained no doubt whatever. The honourable gentleman had proposed to postpone the reading of the resolutions till to-morrow, that he might previously bring forward a specific accusation against the Minister for the misapplication of the vote of credit. Now although he did not wish to have the reading of the resolutions postponed, as, in his opinion, they by no means interfered with the other question, he certainly hoped the honourable gentleman would be as good as his word in bringing forward his specific accusation, that the House might determine as speedily as possible whether the Minister was justifiable in his application of the vote of credit, and whether the exigency of the circumstances did actually require such an expenditure. Now it appeared to him that the Minister was justifiable, from a view of our relative situation at that period; and that instead of reprobation, he deserved commendation. And it appeared moreover to him that we were indebted to the Minister, by his timely, prudent and cautious assistance, for the deliverance of Germany, and the happy change in the political affairs of Europe; and that he might exclaim, in the spirit of what Scipio said to the Romans, "I have spent 1,200,000*l.* but I have saved Germany."

Mr. HARRISON observed, that if the Minister had thought it absolutely necessary to give this money to the Emperor, and had no opportunity of informing Parliament of it, there might have been some excuse for him; but that was not the case. He had been in possession of frequent opportunities between the granting of the vote of credit and his assistance to the Emperor, to come before Parliament and ask them, whether it was prudent and right to render that assistance. That we were to fritter away the Constitution for a pitiful idea of a temporary rise in the price of stocks, appeared to him a subject of very serious import. He treated with contempt the idea that gentlemen were not to object now to this, because they passed it over last night. It was a species of observation which, for want of better, some of the Minister's adherents might use; but it had as little to do with the question before the House, as it had to

do with common sense. He maintained, that to apply money without the consent of Parliament, as it had been applied in this instance, was a high misdemeanor, and deserving the reprehension of that House—the more so as it was part of the system of the Minister to take away all the power of the House of Commons, and to vest it in the hands of the Executive Government. It was upon this principle that barracks had been erected, and were now erecting, all over the kingdom; many of which were begun, and some were now carrying on without the consent of Parliament. And here he had to remark the shameless profligacy in the squandering of the public money upon those buildings; for a sum of 575,000*l.* appeared in the account of the extraordinaries upon the table, not for erecting barracks, but repairing them, and for beer; and the other day as he was passing on the great North road, about one mile from Stilton, and five from Peterborough, he saw one hundred men working close together, in erecting barracks for ten thousand men; and forty acres of ground, he understood, were purchased for that purpose. So great was the profusion and expence, that these barracks, he apprehended, were not built by contract or estimate, but in a random way; and the men employed to build them were not only so numerous as to be in each other's way, but had spent all their mornings in idleness at the public-house, till a superintendant went down lately to control them. He referred to his former motion with respect to pensions, and the reception it had experienced. After the holidays, he said, he intended to bring forward a motion to take into consideration the state of the public expenditure, and decide in what way a saving can be made. In the mean time he approved the motion of his right honourable friend, and concurred in the amendment.

Mr. WILBERFORCE explained, that he did not consider the public knowledge of the assistance given to the Emperor as affecting the 3 per cents. merely, but as productive of more fatal consequences to general credit.

Mr. CURWEN thought the question under consideration the most important in its consequence that he had ever heard discussed. It was not merely 1,400,000*l.* which had been granted to the Emperor, nor the safety of Germany, which made it so important, but it was the safety of the British Constitution. The Commons were always considered as the guardians of the public purse; and in that view this question was more important to them than if the threatened invasion were absolutely put in execution, and the invaders at our doors. It had been said the loan to the Emperor had been the means of saving Germany. But were we,

as Englishmen, to prefer the saving of Germany to the saving of our Constitution? Ministers had most atrociously traduced the best rights—had violently seized the liberties of Britons. They held, or thought they held, the reins of power so tightly, that not even a mortal stab to English freedom could rouse, or if it did rouse, could be successfully resented by the descendants of the Ancient Britons. Ministers, however, had they been aware of the spirit of resistance their oppressive innovations must eventually provoke, would have come to this House, not with a memorandum of that transaction, but with a bill of indemnity. If this measure of the Minister was submitted to, there would be an end at once of the control of the House of Commons over the public purse, the only guard of constitutional freedom. He protested, from his conscience, that if the House did not resent this conduct of the Minister, there would be an end, in his opinion, of all respect to them from worthy man in the kingdom. He observed, that the Minister had studiously endeavoured to degrade the House of Commons upon every occasion, when he had an opportunity of doing so. An honourable gentleman opposite had talked of the candour with which a delinquent should be treated by his friend; but he was of a different opinion; he never could shut his mouth against abuses; and if any friend of his was guilty of a flagrant delinquency, he should blame him more severely than an indifferent person. By such improper lenity and misplaced candour, the people had uniformly been robbed of their best rights. Where was the honourable gentleman's (Mr. Wilberforce) candour, when he said that the vote of credit was applicable to the purpose of a foreign subsidy? If the Minister had called for a subsidy, would not the clamours of the people have been heard all over the country? But he would say something for the right honourable gentleman who assumed so much for the privileges of the Crown, and that was, that he wished he had advised His Majesty to make some sacrifice for the security of his dominions, in conjunction with his people; for a time may come, when the public spirit of a Monarch shall avail him more than all the glitter and parade of tinsel and pomp. The public had a right to expect, when all ranks and degrees of men were so heavily burdened, that some very considerable share should have been borne by the Crown itself. Nothing of the kind, however, had happened; and we see, day after day, that the power of the House of Commons was usurped by the King's Ministers. Unless a different system be adopted, the country must fall to ruin.

The MASTER of the ROLLS could not well say, whether in the course of his parliamentary experience he had ever assisted at

a debate on a subject of a nature so delicate and important as that which was now before the House. In the opinion of some, it ought to supersede the discussion of every other subject, however momentous, even that of voting the supplies ; while others seemed to require that Ministers would have come down to the House for an act of indemnity to screen them from the consequences of the unconstitutional measure which they are accused of having adopted. To neither of these opinions did he incline ; nor, indeed, in his view of the subject, did the present question call on him to pronounce on these points. In general, he thought the second thoughts of the gentlemen opposite him much better than their first ; but on this occasion, he must regard their first thoughts as preferable to their second. For last night, among all the arguments they had adduced, none were directed against the subject now in agitation ; neither could he conceive what had put it in their heads to bring forward the question they had now started ; for Ministers were as criminal and guilty last night as at the present moment : but even supposing them thus guilty, could not these gentlemen permit the present business to go on one stage more, without supposing themselves precluded from bringing forward at a future period the investigation they seemed so eager to institute. The question now was, whether the House would agree to the report of the ways and means ; and though this were disposed of, would no opportunity occur of agitating the other question ? Might not this vote precede that agitation ? Surely, abundant opportunities would offer of bringing it before the House ; and if it be of that importance it is said to be, ought it not to be brought forward directly and distinctly, and not collaterally, and implicated in a business with which it had no connection ? At present he was not prepared to decide on the question, whether this conduct of the Minister should be imputed to him as a crime or not. It was not the question that now awaited decision ; and he wished that no gentleman would answer what might be farther offered on the occasion ; for his part, he could not permit himself to be convinced by the arguments that were urged on the other side.

Mr. WILLIAM SMITH said, that as much greater abilities than his had been exerted that night to convince the honourable and learned gentleman who spoke last, he could not expect to be able to convince him. With respect to the argument attempted to be deduced from the words of the vote of credit, he had to say, that similar words were to be met with in the vote of credit passed in 1794 ; and since those words were not then introduced prophetically with reference to such an occasion as the present, they could not have

been meant to direct the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his conduct in the year 1796.

The question for the House to decide on was, whether, in a constitutional point of view, the question of his right hon. friend was of sufficient importance to induce the House to dismiss the reading of the resolutions, and give that the preference? If the question of his right hon. friend was constitutionally important, he thought the House would not consider the motion for delay unnecessary.

Lord HAWKESBURY wished the charge to be brought forward directly, and argued fairly; still, however, let it be brought forward when it would, it did not prevent the House from voting the money for the supplies that evening, because the money sent to the Emperor was not included in the question of the resolutions, nor was the House pledging itself at a future time to justify that expenditure. All must coincide with him in opinion, that the supplies ought not, at this particular crisis, to be stopped unnecessarily for a single moment; and as the question alluded to could be brought forward as well to-morrow, he conceived no prejudice could arise from what, in fact, would only be the appearance of delay. The idea started was of a very important nature; and those who entertained an anxiety for the proper maintenance of the Constitution, must wish to meet the discussion with all possible dispatch. His Lordship deprecated any unnecessary delay; but its immediate investigation appeared to him absolutely incompatible with the honour and dignity of the House and Country; because it would appear to give a negative to their resolutions of last night, so requisite for the support of our operations at home and abroad.

Mr. FOX. I certainly think it extremely important to understand what the question is. An honourable gentleman has said that he can suppose it possible for the House to vote for the second reading of the resolutions, and at the same time not to negative the object proposed by my honourable friend. But what is this but to suppose it possible that the House can pass by a great constitutional question in order to vote supplies? It is an old dictum, that grievances ought to precede supplies, and which, as a dictum, no man will dispute. And what is demanded? the interval of a single day. A noble Lord has well termed it an appearance of delay. But which is better, this appearance of delay, when it is proposed to consider what I term a violent infraction of the Constitution, or this appearance of indecent precipitation to assent to the supplies brought forward by the Minister? A learned gentleman has suggested that I cannot be right in this question, because I stated no opposition on the particular topic last night. Because at a late hour,

and amidst a variety of topics, I did not touch on this particular topic, am I not to be permitted to resume the subject? . Because we may happen not to urge our objections to a measure in the first instance, are we to be debarred the privilege of discussion for ever? Another gentleman tells us, that we have no right to talk of the death of the Constitution, because we have predicted it more than once. . What, may we not anticipate a fatal issue at the very moment we perceive the symptoms of rapid decay and approaching dissolution? In the traitorous correspondence and alien bills, when I found that all sound principles of justice were disregarded, I then thought that the Constitution had received a great blow. I thought also that it had received a great blow when the bill suspending the Habeas Corpus was suffered to be passed. On the bills brought forward last year I expressed my opinion, that if they were carried into laws, and acted upon to their extent, they would tend to crush the spirit of the people, and subdue the freedom of the country. On these subjects I am told by gentlemen on the other side, that I am apt to be declamatory. If when I feel warmly, to speak warmly be to be declamatory, I confess that I am. Though I think there are persons in this House addicted to use as much declamation with as small a portion of argument as I am. If when I said that these bills would so far lower the spirit, and infringe the privileges of the people, I had added, that under their operation the Minister would come down to the House, would declare that he had already disposed of a large sum of public money without the advice and consent of Parliament, and announced his future intention to give away sums at discretion, without asking for their approbation, would not this have been called declamation? Could it be supposed that such a daring infringement of the privileges of the House, such a gross insult to the character of the Representatives of the people, would tamely be endured? I am told that we often have talked of this last fight for our liberties. Yes; we will fight wherever we can. Because they invade one fortress of the Constitution, do they suppose that we will tamely lie down and yield ourselves to slavery? No; we will make a stand in those fortresses which may yet remain; we will preserve while any thing is left to defend, or whilst we retain any strength to struggle against the foe; though I greatly fear that if the same system of invading our rights should be continued, there will shortly nothing remain which will be worth the contest. The subsidy to the King of Prussia has been referred to on the present occasion. That subsidy differed intirely from the description of grants which Ministers have thought proper to make to his Imperial Majesty. That subsidy was granted directly, and under the sanction of

a vote of Parliament. But in the present instance a sum is required to be voted for a retrospective service, which has not formed the subject of any estimate. And what is still more remarkable, out of this sum paid to the Emperor, only 70,000*l.* were remitted during the recess of Parliament ; all the rest was granted at a time either before the separation of the last Parliament, or at a period when the present Parliament were actually sitting. And what is the argument employed to justify this conduct? “ that it was necessary to conceal the extent of the sums remitted, in order to keep up the credit of the country.” This, indeed, is a new argument to be used by the right honourable gentleman in a British Parliament—by the right honourable gentleman by whom we have been so often reminded to look our situation in the face, and who has so often enforced the maxim to give publicity to all our financial operations, in order to create confidence in our resources. Under all the circumstances of the case, it must appear that the whole of the transaction has been adopted by the choice of Ministers. I was astonished when I heard the word “ exigency” adopted in the present instance. There can be no case of exigency, however important the crisis, if that could have been done with the consent of Parliament, which has been done without it. Even if Germany has been delivered by the aid which has been granted by Ministers, that aid would not have been rendered less effectual by the interposition of Parliament. The advantage derived from the policy of concealment is but short lived. It is afterwards dearly repaid by the constant suspicion which it begets in every future instance. If the argument should be used by a free people, “ You say that money has been remitted to a foreign power ; the thing is impossible ; there has been no vote of Parliament ? the Constitution forbids any such infringement of the rights of the Representatives of the people.” The person to whom this is addressed replies, “ What is all this to me ; your Minister has shewn in a former instance that he can dispense with your Constitution, and contemn the rights of the Representatives of the People ; he has given money on a former occasion to a foreign Prince, and why should he not have done so in the present instance ?” Thus from the duplicity of a Minister, distrust may be thrown upon the credit of a people, when there is not the smallest foundation for suspicion. Thus, from his daring infringement of their rights, a free people may be deprived of the proud boast and invaluable privileges of their Constitution. As for those who deceive, they may gain some temporary advantage, but they lose all real advantage of character. If, therefore, we would shew ourselves to be, what we really are, the crea-

tures of the people, and not the trusters of Ministers, let us not be the dupes of this unprincipled policy ; let us be mindful of the source from which we sprung, and anxious to guard the rights of those to whom we owe our delegated trust.

Ex quibus ortus sis, non quibuscum vivas, considera.

One honourable gentleman has talked in such a stile of asperity of all the opponents of Ministers, that one would suppose that, in order to give effect to his expression, he could do nothing less than bring in a bill to silence all those who do not implicitly approve of the proceedings of the last Parliament, and the policy of his favourite Administration. Sir, much allusion has been made to the line of argument held by Opposition. If we talked of the Constitution, it was said, What have we to do with the Constitution ? You have long since predicted its downfall. You are one of those incorrigible Jacobins, who have no interest in the constitution. If we talk of the measures to be adopted, in order to guard against invasion, it was asked, What have you to do with invasion, you who would even wish some mischief to befall the country, in order that you might exult in the disgrace of Ministers ? Such is the mode of reasoning by which they attempt to answer our arguments. Notwithstanding, however, this summary mode of answering all our arguments, and which goes to the extent of taking from us all right of discussion, whilst I continue in this House I will talk as becomes the Representative of a Free People. I was born free ; and whilst I live, I will continue to be free. Whilst I sit here, I will not forego that freedom of debate, which is the most essential privilege of a House of Commons. The measure which I now oppose is a most daring attack on one of our dearest and most important rights. And if the House of Commons tamely submit to sanction such a violation of their most valuable prerogatives, the consequence ultimately must be disgrace to themselves, and ruin to the country.

Mr. Chancellor PITT expressed his determination, under the circumstances of the present moment, to press the measure of immediately voting the supplies, without allowing himself to be diverted to any extraneous subject of discussion. He at the same time declared himself ready to meet the discussion respecting the grants of money to the Emperor, whenever a specific day should be appointed for the purpose.

Mr. BASTARD declared, that he would vote for immediately going into the supplies. Yet he felt himself called on to state that he did not approve of the measure pursued with respect to the loan made to the Emperor, and he trusted that the sense of the House

would be so expressed on that occasion, as to prevent, at any future time, a repetition of a similar conduct.

The House divided on the question, that the word "to-morrow" be inserted instead of "now."

Ayes, 58; Noes, 164.

The original question was then put and carried. The resolutions were read a second time, and agreed to.

A short conversation took place on the proposed additional duties on sugar and coffee, between Mr. Bryan Edwards, Mr. Sewel, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, &c. After which the House adjourned.

List of the Minority on the Amendment, "That the Report of the Resolutions of the Committee of Supply be deferred till to-morrow."

Anson, T.
Aubrey, Sir J.
Baker, J.
Barclay, G.
Beauclerk, G. G.
Biddulph, R.
Bird, W.
Beauverie, Honourable E.
Brogden, J.
Burch, J. R.
Burdett, F.
Cavendish, Lord G.
Coke, Edward
Coke, T. W.
Colhoun, W.
Combe, H. C.
Courtenay, J.
Crewe, J.
Davers, Sir C.
Erskine, Honourable T.
Fitzpatrick, General
Foley, Honourable E.
Fox, C. J.
Grey, C.
Green, J.
Hare, J.
Huffey, W.
Harrison, J.
Jefferys, N.

Jekyll, J.
Jervois, C. J.
Knight, R. P.
Kemp, F.
Lloyd, J. R.
Martin, J.
Milbanke, R.
Milner, Sir W.
Nichols, J.
North, D.
Plumer, W.
Richardson, J.
Russell, Lord W.
St. John St. Andrew
Scudamore, J.
Sheridau, R. B.
Shum, G.
Smith, W.
Spencer, Lord R.
Sturt, C.
Tarleton, General
Thompson, T.
Tufton, Honourable H.
Tufton, Honourable J.
Vane, Sir F. F.
Vyner, R.
Whitbread, S.
Western, C. C.
Walwyn, J.

TELLERS,

Curwen, J. C.

Taylor, M. A.

Friday, 9th December.

Mr. Manning brought up the London Wet-dock bill, which was read a first time.

Mr. MANNING said, that as a bill had been introduced into the last Parliament which explained the object of the present bill, and the Report of the Committee which had been appointed to examine the subject, presented such ample elucidations, as to the tendency of the measure, he did not conceive it necessary to trouble the House with any particular details. Still, however, there were some circumstances which had come to his knowledge connected with the object of the bill, and illustrative of the grievances which it was intended to remove, which were so striking that he begged leave to take notice of them. From the inadequate accommodations which the merchants of the city of London had for its increased commerce, their property on board the ships in the river was liable to very great depredations. He had been informed from the best authority, that these depredations continued to a very dangerous and alarming height. By an act of Parliament, passed some time ago, called the Bum-boat act, a power was given to stop any boats upon the river loaded with goods, of which a proper account could not be given to the Magistrates by the persons conveying them. He was informed, that at the office at Shadwell, out of three hundred and forty-two persons convicted of the offence, more than one hundred had paid the penalty of 40*l.* which the act of Parliament imposed, and had again been let loose to commit similar depredations. A considerable number had also been convicted at the office in Whitechapel, and had been liberated, after having paid the penalty. This shewed that the act passed on this subject was not adequate for the purpose, and that something more was necessary to guard the evil. This it was the object of the bill to effect by removing the temptation, and the opportunity of the crime. As the bill now read a first time, however, involved such a variety of interests, it was not his intention to hurry it through the House without allowing every party to be heard, and every objection to be obviated. He, therefore, meant to have the bill read a second time after the Christmas recess, and at present only moved that it be read a first time.

Mr. Alderman ANDERSON was glad the second reading was put off. The bill, in its present shape, would ruin a great many persons, whose interests were not to be neglected. He now had the satisfaction to say, that the plan which the city of London had been engaged in drawing up was completed, and would be sub-

mitted to the House immediately after the Christmas recess, and he hoped that it would be found to combine such an attention to the property of individuals with the public accommodation as would merit the approbation of the House.

Colonel PORTER gave notice, that, as he understood that business of great importance was expected to occur, he should move that the House be called over on Tuesday next.

Monday, 12th December.

Mr. JEKYLL said, that if ever there was a period which demanded more vigilance on the part of the Legislature than any other, to guard against every encroachment on the Constitution, this was that period. It was his duty to state, and unless he received a satisfactory answer, he should bring before the House in a more detailed state, a subject which had been mentioned in all the diurnal prints for some days past: it was a letter from Mr. Wodhall to the Earl of Northampton. In this letter Mr. Wodhall represented that he had been in the situation of Deputy Lieutenant for twenty-eight years; that he had attended a meeting under the new militia act; that he had found the place, where the Justices met, surrounded by a body of cavalry, by order of the War-office; and that the cavalry prevented the appellants from coming forward. Mr. Jekyll here read Mr. Wodhall's letter, of which the following is a copy:

To the Earl of Northampton, Lord Lieutenant of the county of Northampton.

" MY LORD,

" On going yesterday to the first meeting for Brackly division, under the new militia act, I observed a troop of cavalry parading before the house; two justices and two other Deputy Lieutenants were there, and just proceeding to business; they all assured me that the military did not attend in consequence of any application from them; but that the Commanding officer produced orders from the War Office, signed by one of Mr. Wodham's clerks. No riot or disturbance whatever had taken place, and the numerous Constables appeared fully competent to the preservation of the peace; the soldiers, however, continued to obstruct our door during the whole day; and, on my remarking the delay which arose from one of the Constables not collecting the appellants from his parish, and bringing them into the room, he excused himself by saying, that the soldiers would not suffer them to enter the house.

" Under this newly-adopted system of military government it is highly incompatible with my principles to act any longer as a Deputy Lieutenant. Being unacquainted with your Lordship's town residence, I take the liberty of requesting Mr. Markham to fill up the direction, and forward this letter by the post, and to keep the Deputation, which I re-

ceived 28 years ago from Lord Halifax, till he has an opportunity of delivering it.

“ I am, my Lord,
 “ Your Lordship's most obedient, and
 “ Most humble servant,

Thensford, near Banbury, Dec. 3, 1796.

“ M. WODHALL.”

After having read the letter, Mr. Jekyll expressed a hope that he should receive some satisfactory information on the subject from the Secretary at War.

The SECRETARY AT WAR said, that he had waited with much anxiety to know what this business was which “ roared so loud and thundered in the index !” He had not been able to foresee what was now brought forward, and was indeed wholly ignorant of the transaction to which it related, as he was not perhaps so diligent in the perusal of the Newspapers as he ought to be. The honourable gentleman must therefore remain without an answer till he had made an inquiry in his office with respect to the subject of his motion. If an order, such as Mr. Wodhall stated in his letter to have been sent from the War Office, had ever issued from thence, he was convinced it must have issued on such an application as fully warranted the measure. This complaint which the honourable gentleman brought forward was not quite so extraordinary in its nature as the honourable gentleman seemed to consider it. He recollected last session to have heard a formal complaint made by a noble Lord (Lord Ruffel) respecting the interference of the military on a certain occasion ; and when he came to inquire into the matter, he found the circumstances to have been intirely misrepresented, and that the military had conducted themselves with most perfect propriety. He had little doubt but that upon farther inquiry this complaint would turn out to be of the same nature.

Mr. JEKYLL in reply said, this recent complaint could not be of a similar nature to that mentioned lately by a noble Lord, if the case were truly stated by the Secretary at War ; inasmuch as the Magistrates acting with Mr. Wodhall had declared that no such application had been made by them.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS acquainted the House, that he had a message from His Majesty to this House, signed by His Majesty ; and he presented the same to the House, and it was read by Mr. Speaker, and is as followeth, viz.

GEORGE R.

His Majesty is concerned to acquaint the House of Commons, that his endeavours to preserve peace with Spain, and to adjust all matters

in discussion with that Court, by an amicable negotiation, have been rendered ineffectual, by an abrupt and unprovoked declaration of war on the part of the Catholic King.

His Majesty, at the same time that he sincerely laments this addition to the calamities of war, already extending over so great part of Europe, has the satisfaction to reflect, that nothing has been omitted on his part, which could contribute to the maintenance of peace, on grounds consistent with the honour of his crown, and the interests of his dominions.

And he trusts, that, under the protection of Divine Providence, the firmness and wisdom of his Parliament will enable him effectually to repel this unprovoked aggression, and to afford, to all Europe, an additional proof of the spirit and resources of the British nation.

G. R.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS moved that His Majesty's message should be taken into consideration to-morrow.

Mr. GREY thought, that as His Majesty's speech at the beginning of the session had announced that the apparent hostile dispositions of the Court of Madrid had led to discussions, of which he was not then able to acquaint the House with the final result; and as some memorials and papers must have passed between the two Courts, it would be proper that those papers should be laid before the House previous to the consideration of the message.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, his right honourable friend had just gone to the bar to bring them up.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS brought up a copy of the declaration of war by the Spanish Court, and notified that the answer to this declaration would be laid before the House to-morrow.

The following are the copies of those papers laid upon the table of the House for the perusal of the Members:

TRANSLATION of the DECLARATION of WAR of the Court of MADRID against GREAT BRITAIN.

Palace of St. Laurence, October 5, 1796.

Published at Madrid the 8th of October.

Received officially from the Marquis of Bute, His Majesty's Ambassador at the Court of Madrid, by Lord Grenville, December 3, 1796.

Westminster, December 12, 1796.

ONE of the principal motives which determined me to make peace with the French Republick, as soon as its government began to take a regular and solid form, was the conduct which England had observed towards me during the whole course of the war, and the just distrust which

the experience of her ill-faith ought to occasion on my part for the future. This ill-faith became manifest in the most critical moment of the first campaign, from the manner in which Admiral Hood treated my fleet at Toulon, where he attended to nothing but the destruction of what he could not carry away with him; and from his presently after taking possession of Corsica, which expedition that Admiral concealed with the greatest care from Don Juan de Langara, when they were together at Toulon.

The English Ministry afterwards confirmed the same from their silence in all their negotiations with other powers, especially by the treaty which was signed the 19th November, 1794, with the United States of America, without any respect or consideration for my rights, which were well known to them.

I noticed also that ill-faith in their repugnance to adopt the plans and ideas which might accelerate the conclusion of the war, and in the vague answer Lord Grenville gave to my Ambassador the Marquis Del Campo, when he applied for succours to continue it.

I was finally confirmed in that opinion by the injustice with which they appropriated to themselves the valuable cargo of the Spanish re-captured ship Saint Jago, or Achilles, which they ought to have restored according to the agreement between my first Secretary of State, and of the Despacho, the Prince de la Paz, and Lord St. Helens, His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador; and by the detention of the naval stores coming for the use of my arsenals on board Dutch vessels, the forwarding of which was delayed under fresh pretexts and difficulties.

Lastly, I had no doubt left of the ill-faith in the conduct of England, from the frequent arrival of English vessels on the coast of Peru and Chili, to carry on a contraband trade, and reconnoitre those coasts, under the pretext of the whale fishery, a privilege they claimed by the Nootka Convention.

Such were the proceedings of the English Ministry, to prove the friendship, good understanding, and strict confidence, which they had offered to observe with Spain in all the operations of the war, by virtue of the Convention of the 25th May, 1793.

Since peace was concluded with the French Republic, I have not only had the best-grounded motives to suppose England harboured an intention to attack my American possessions; but I have received direct injuries, which have confirmed to me the resolution formed by that Ministry, to oblige me to adopt a part contrary to the good of humanity, torn to pieces by the bloody war which is annihilating Europe, and contrary to the sincere desire I have manifested, on repeated occasions, to put an end to it by means of peace, proposing my good offices to accelerate its conclusion.

England has, in fact, shewn openly her views against my dominions, by the great expeditions and armaments sent to the West Indies, destined in part against Saint Domingo, in order to impede its delivery to France, as is evident from the proclamations of the English Generals in that island; by the establishment of trading companies in North America, on the banks of the river Missouri, with an intention to penetrate through those regions to the South Sea; and lastly, by the conquest she has just made on the continent of South America, of the colony and river of Demerari, belonging to the Dutch, which advantageous situation puts her in the way to occupy other important points.

But her views have been still more hostilely and more clearly shewn by

her repeated insults to my flag, and by the violence committed in the Mediterranean, by her ships of war, in taking out of different Spanish vessels the recruits for my armies, who were coming from Genoa to Barcelona; by the acts of piracy and vexation, by which the Corsican privateers, protected by the English Government in the island, destroy the Spanish trade in the Mediterranean, even within the bays of the coast of Catalonia; and by the detention of several Spanish vessels, laden with Spanish property, which have been carried into the English ports under frivolous pretexts; especially by the embargo of the rich cargo of the Spanish ship *Minerva*, executed with outrage to the Spanish flag, and still detained in spite of the most authentic documents, shewing the said cargo to be Spanish property, having been presented in the proper court.

The offence has not been less grievous which has been offered to the character of my Ambassador Don Simon de las Casas, by one of the courts of law in London, which ordered him to be arrested on the ground of a demand, made by a master of a vessel, for a very small sum of money.

And, lastly, it has been no longer possible to tolerate the enormous violations of the Spanish territory, on the coasts of Alicant and Galicia, committed by the brigs of the English navy, the *Cameleon* and *Kangaroo*; and that which took place at the island of Trinidad was still more scandalous and insolent, when Captain Vaughan, commander of the *Alarm* frigate, landed, with colours flying and drums beating, at the head of his whole ship's company armed, to attack the French, and revenge injuries which he said he had received, thus disturbing, by a proceeding so offensive to my sovereignty, the tranquillity of the inhabitants of that island.

By such reiterated and unheard-of insults, that ambitious nation has repeated to the world the examples of her knowing no other law than that of the aggrandizement of her trade, by means of an universal despotism by sea. She has gone beyond the bounds of my moderation and forbearance, and obliges me, in order to support the honor of my Crown, and to attend to the protection I owe my subjects, to declare war against the King of England, his kingdoms, and subjects, and to command that such orders be sent to all parts of my dominions, as may be best calculated for the defence of my beloved subjects, and for the annoyance of the enemy.

ANSWER to the Declaration of War of the Court of Madrid against Great Britain.

THE open and undisguised aggressions of Spain, the violences committed against the persons and properties of His Majesty's subjects, and the unprovoked declaration of war on the part of that power, have at length obliged His Majesty to take the necessary measures for repelling force by force, and for vindicating the dignity of His Crown, and the rights and interests of his people.

At the moment of adopting these measures, His Majesty thinks it due to himself to remove every shade of doubt which could be thrown on the indisputable justice of his cause; and it will be easily proved, from the very reasons adduced by the Court of Madrid in support of its declaration of war, that all the calamities which may ensue from it are solely to be attributed to the conduct of his enemies.

A simple reference to that declaration, and a bare enumeration of the vague and frivolous charges which it contains, would indeed be sufficient to satisfy all reasonable and impartial minds, that no part of the conduct of Great Britain towards Spain has afforded the smallest ground of complaint, much less any motive sufficiently powerful for adding to the present calamities of Europe, all the evils of a new and complicated war.

The only difficulty of a more detailed reply arises not from the strength and importance of the complaints alledged, but from their weakness and futility—from the confused and unintelligible shape in which they are brought forward, and from the impossibility of referring them to any established principle or rule of justice, to any usual form or topic of complaint between independent governments, or to any of those motives which can alone create the painful duty of an appeal to arms.

The acts of hostility attributed to His Majesty in the manifesto of Spain, consist either of matters perfectly innocent and indifferent in their nature, or of imputed opinions and intentions of which no proof is adduced, nor any effect alledged, or lastly, of complaints of the misconduct of unauthorized individuals; respecting all which His Majesty has never failed to institute inquiry, where inquiry was necessary, and to cause justice to be done in the regular course of judicial proceedings. The very nature of such complaints affords a sufficient answer to the conclusion attempted to be drawn from them by Spain; and His Majesty might have been well justified in declining all farther discussion on points, on which it was manifest that no just motive of hostility could be grounded.

Such, however, was not his conduct. Anxious to avert from both kingdoms the calamities of war, he has repeatedly, but in vain, proposed to adjust, by amicable discussion, all points of difference which could subsist between the governments of two nations, whose real interests were the same, and who had an equal concern in opposing the progress of a common enemy.

This discussion having always been studiously avoided by the Court of Madrid, it now remains only for His Majesty to vindicate, in this public manner, his own cause, and to prove the futility of those pretences by which that Court now seeks to colour its aggression.

The first point brought forward to support an accusation of ill-faith, is the conduct of the King's Admiral at Toulon; who is charged with having destroyed those ships and naval stores of the enemy which he could not carry away with him; and with having afterwards undertaken an expedition to Corsica without the knowledge or participation of the Spanish Admiral. To an accusation of such a nature, alledged as a ground for war between two great nations, it can hardly be expected that a serious answer should be given. It is, perhaps, the first time that it has been imputed as a crime to one of the commanding officers of two powers acting in alliance, and making common cause in war, that he did more than his proportion of mischief to the common enemy. And if it be really true that such a sentiment was entertained at Madrid, certainly no other justification can be necessary for not inviting the officers of that court to join in subsequent expeditions against the same enemy: at all events, it cannot be pretended that a co-operation between two allies (however cordial and sincere) in any one particular enterprize, could afterwards restrain either of them from undertaking separately any other, to which his own force appeared in itself to be adequate.

The second instance of ill-faith attributed to His Majesty, is the conclusion of a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States of

America; a power with whom both Great Britain and Spain were at peace; with whom the King, as well as His Catholic Majesty, was perfectly free to contract any such engagements; and with whom the Court of Madrid has actually concluded a similar treaty, with this difference only, that the stipulations of the British treaty can give no ground of offence or injury to any other power, while the Spanish treaty contains an article (that respecting the navigation of the Mississippi) which, if it could have any force or effect at all, would be on the part of Spain a direct breach of treaty with Great Britain, and a gross violation of the important and unquestionable rights of His Majesty and His People.

The same ill-faith is said to have been manifested in the unwillingness shewn by the British Government to adopt the plans proposed by Spain for hastening the conclusion of the war with France, (but what these plans were, it is not stated), and also in the omitting to comply with an application made by Spain for pecuniary succours, as necessary to enable her to act against the common enemy. The failure of such an application cannot certainly be matter of surprize to any one who considers the situation and conduct of Spain during the war. It can hardly be alledged even as an excuse for the precipitate peace concluded by Spain, without the knowledge of her allies; but it is difficult to conceive how such a refusal can be made a ground of hostility towards Great Britain, or with what consistency the inability of Spain to prosecute the former contest without pecuniary aid from its ally, can have become a motive of engaging gratuitously in all the expences and difficulties of a new war, against that very power.

With regard to the condemnation of the *St. Jago*, (a prize taken from the enemy by His Majesty's naval forces), His Majesty has only to reply to the injurious assertions on that subject in the Spanish manifesto, that the claims of all the parties in that cause were publicly heard and decided according to the known law of nations, and before the only competent tribunal; one whose impartiality is above all suspicion.

The conduct of His Majesty respecting the naval stores, which were claimed by Spain, though found on board Dutch vessels, has been in like manner exempt from all blame; nor was any unnecessary delay interposed respecting those cargoes till the equivocal conduct of Spain, and the strong and just suspicion of her hostile dispositions, made it impossible for His Majesty to consent to supply her from the ports of his dominions with the means of acting against himself.

The next charge relates to the alledged misconduct of some merchant ships in landing their crews on the coasts of Chili and Peru, with the view of carrying on there an illicit commerce, and of reconnoitering the country. On this it is to be observed, that these views are not attempted to be proved by any fact whatever; that if any act was in truth committed by individuals in those distant territories against the laws of the government established there, those laws might have been enforced upon the spot; and that the Court of London has always been open to receive and redress all complaints of that nature. But that what is assigned in the manifesto as a mere cover and pretext for fraud, namely, the exercise of the whale fishery by the English in those parts, is not, as is there asserted, a right which the English "claim under the convention of Nootka." It is one, which was not then for the first time established, but solemnly recognized by the Court of Madrid, as having always belonged to Great Britain, and the full and undisturbed exercise of which was guaranteed to His Majesty's subjects in terms so express as to admit

of no doubt, and in a transaction so recent, that ignorance of it cannot be pretended.

Such, it seems, were the offences of the British Government, and such the jealousies and apprehensions of Spain, during the time when the Courts of London and Madrid were united in the bonds of alliance, and engaged in a common cause: and it is on motives as frivolous as these, that the Court of Madrid began to project an offensive alliance with the King's enemies; a design which it now professes to have entertained from the moment when it separated itself from the common cause, but which was long after that period disguised under the most positive and explicit assurances of neutrality.

It is insinuated, that the good offices of His Catholic Majesty for bringing about a general pacification, had been tendered to Great Britain, and had been refused. What degree of impartiality could have been expected from such a mediation, the dispositions which Spain now avows herself to have entertained at that period sufficiently shew; His Majesty exercised his undoubted right of judging for himself and for his people, how far a negotiation commenced under such auspices was likely to contribute to the honour and interests of his dominions; and he now finds the propriety of his decision confirmed beyond a doubt, by the conduct and avowals of Spain.

It is next stated, that in the prosecution of the war, in which Great Britain is engaged, her views seem uniformly to have been directed to the annoyance of the Spanish possessions in America. In support of this accusation, are adduced an expedition directed against Saint Domingo, the conquest of the Dutch colony of Demerary, and the supposed establishment of British commercial companies on the banks of the Missouri, formed with a view of penetrating to the South Sea.

This latter point is one to which it is impossible to make a specific answer, because the British Government has no knowledge of any fact to which it can refer. Within the Spanish territory, the Spanish Government certainly possesses both the right and the power to prevent individuals from trading:—Within the American territory, His Majesty's subjects have by treaty a right to settle and to trade. And they have also an express right freely to navigate the Mississippi, by which the territories of Spain and of the United States are divided from each other. Unless therefore it can be shewn that the British Government has authorized any settlement on the Spanish territory, this complaint can afford no pretence for hostility against His Majesty.

With regard to the expedition against St. Domingo, and to the conquest of Demerary, it is impossible to refrain from remarking, that however highly the rights of neutral nations ought to be respected, and whatever delicacy His Majesty might be disposed to feel towards those of a power so lately his ally, and not yet become his enemy,—it is a new and hitherto unheard-of claim of neutrality, which is to be circumscribed by no bounds either of time or place, which extends equally beyond the date and beyond the limits of possession, and is to attach not to the territories of a neutral power itself, but to whatever may once have belonged to it, and to whatever may be situated in its neighbourhood, although in the possession of an actual enemy.

The subject, however, of Saint Domingo, deserves to be more particularly adverted to, because the attempt on the part of Spain to cede a part of that island to France, is a breach of that solemn treaty under which alone the Crown of Spain holds any part of its American possessions.

The conclusion of such an article, without the knowledge of an ally so deeply concerned as Great Britain in that stipulation, both in right and interest, was therefore an act, such as would have justified any measures to which the Court of London could have recourse ; yet so earnest was the King's desire to maintain peace with Spain, that he repeatedly endeavoured to fix, by amicable discussion with that Court, the period when the right of Spain to the territory so ceded was to cease, in order that any operation which it might become expedient for his troops to undertake there, might be directed against the French alone : and although no explanation could ever be obtained from the Court of Madrid on this subject, his commanders on the spot were restrained from acting, and did not act against the Spanish part of the island, till the cession actually took place, by which it became, as far as the act of Spain could make it, a part of the territories of France.

To the accusations which make up the greater part of the remainder of the manifesto, respecting the detention or capture of merchant ships, or the violations of territory there mentioned, it is sufficient to reply, that in every case of such a nature which has been brought to the knowledge of the British Government, the most effectual measures have been instantly taken for instituting inquiry into the particulars of the transaction, for collecting the proofs necessary to ascertain the fact on which the charge is founded, and for submitting the whole to that regular course of proceeding in which justice is to be rendered in these cases, according to the established practice throughout Europe, and to the express stipulations of the treaties between Great Britain and Spain.

Amidst the wide and complicated operations of a naval war, extended over every quarter of the globe, it is not improbable that some disorders and irregularities may have taken place, which the utmost vigilance of the Government could not immediately discover or repress ; and that in the exercise of the undoubted right of a power at war, to search out and to seize the property of the enemy, the rights of neutral nations may, in some instances, have been unintentionally exposed to temporary molestation. The same observation was not less applicable to Spain in her war with France ; and the short interval that has elapsed since her declaration against Great Britain, has amply shewn that similar complaints will arise from her conduct in the present war.

The utmost that can be demanded, in such cases, of a power at war, is that it should shew itself ready, on all occasions, to listen to the remonstrances and reclamations of those whom it may have aggrieved, and prompt and expeditious in redressing their injuries, and in restoring their property : and to the readiness of the British Government to fulfil these duties, in every case where they have been called upon to do so, even Spain herself may safely be called to bear witness. Nor would it be easy to cite a more striking proof of the friendly disposition of the King's Government, and of the particular attention manifested towards the rights and interests of Spain, than arises from an impartial examination of the detail of what has passed on this subject. It will be found that the causes of complaints, whether well or ill founded, which have been brought forward, are much fewer than ever have occurred within the same period in former times. And the Court of Spain, when called upon to specify particulars on this head, is obliged to have recourse to an allegation of the depredations of Corsican privateers.

There remains but one ground upon which the Court of Spain pretends to account to the world for the rash and perfidious step which it has

taken in declaring war against England, and to excuse to all Europe the calamities which cannot fail to result from such a measure ; the supposed decree of arrest asserted to have been issued against the Spanish Ambassador at the Court of London. The fact, to which this relates, must have been grossly mistaken before it could be made to appear, even in the eyes of Spain, a fit motive for the slightest representation or complaint, much *more* a justifiable cause of war between the two kingdoms.

By the stress which is laid upon this transaction, who is there that would not be led to imagine that the law-suit commenced against the Spanish Ambassador was attended with some peculiar circumstances of personal indignity ? that the insult was intentional, and originated with the British Government ? or that, on being apprized of the offence, the Court of London had shewn some unwillingness or delay in proceeding to the prosecution of the parties concerned in it ?

Who but would be astonished to learn that the process itself was no more than a simple citation to answer at law for a debt demanded ? that the suing this process was the mistaken act of an individual, who was immediately disavowed by the Government, and ordered to be prosecuted for his conduct, and who made, (but made in vain), repeated and submissive applications to the Spanish Ambassador for forgiveness and interference on his behalf ? That cases of the same nature have frequently arisen in England from the ignorance of individuals, and from the ready appeal to the laws which the happy Constitution of the Country admits and authorizes, without the previous intervention or knowledge of any branch of the Executive Government ? And that in all similar cases, and particularly in one which had occurred only a few weeks before, precisely the same measures have been pursued by the Government to vindicate the privileges of foreign Ministers, and have uniformly, and without exception, been accepted as completely adequate to that object, and satisfactory to the dignity and honour of the sovereign whom the case concerned.

Such then are the frivolous motives, and pretended wrongs, which Spain has chosen to assign as the justification of her declaration of war against Great Britain : such are the topics of complaint upon which His Majesty has repeatedly offered the most unequivocal explanation ; upon which he has long and earnestly endeavoured to persuade the Court of Madrid to enter into a full and amicable discussion, for the purpose of averting from his own subjects, from those of His Catholic Majesty, and from Europe, the extremities of war.

When upon grounds of such a nature, and with the offer of negotiation, repeatedly presented to its choice, a power has willfully and wantonly chosen a war, in which its prosperity, its happiness, and its safety are hazarded, and in which it will have as much to fear from the success of its allies, as from that of its enemies—It surely is not too much to presume, that, even in its own eyes, that power is not justified for the proceeding which it adopted, and that there must be some unassigned motive of irresistible necessity which induces it to pursue measures alike inconsistent with its interest and with its honour.

It will be plain to all posterity—it is now notorious to Europe, that neither to the genuine wishes, nor even to the mistaken policy of Spain, her present conduct is to be attributed ; that not from enmity towards Great Britain, not from any resentment of past or apprehension of future injuries, but from a blind subserviency to the views of His Majesty's

enemies, from the dominion usurped over her councils and actions by her new allies, she has been compelled to act in a quarrel, and for interests not her own; to take up arms against one of those powers, in whose cause she had professed to feel the strongest interest; and even to menace with hostility another, against whom no cause of complaint is pretended, except its honourable and faithful adherence to its engagements.

Under these circumstances, His Majesty forbears to enumerate the several grounds of just complaint which he has had occasion, on his part, to prefer to the Court of Madrid, since the conclusion of the peace between France and Spain; the many and gross instances of unjust partiality towards his enemies; of undue protection afforded to their ships; and of injuries committed, and allowed to be committed, on those of His Majesty and his subjects.

Confident of having acquitted himself to the world of any share in originating the present war, he finds in the manifest and unprovoked aggression of the enemy, a sufficient cause for calling forth the resources of his kingdoms, and the spirit of his subjects; and he commits to the Divine Providence the issue of a contest which it was to the last moment his earnest endeavour to avoid, and which he now ardently desires to bring to a speedy and honourable termination.

Mr. THELLUSSON stated, that he was out of town when the order of the House passed for taking into consideration Mr. Tierney's petition against his election, as to-morrow; and that, however anxious he was for the House to come to an early decision on the subject, he declared that he could not be prepared with so early an answer to the allegations contained in that petition; he wished, therefore, the indulgence of the House for a few days longer, and begged leave to move, "That the order of the day for the House going into a ballot on the Southwark election to-morrow, be discharged, and that the House go into the said ballot on Friday next."

Mr. WHITBREAD rose to oppose what he considered as one of the strangest motions that ever had been made to the House. He reminded the House of the whole course of the business. When the petition was presented, he announced his intention of making a general motion on the subject. This, however, he deferred till after the merits of the petition were decided, because it was his wish that the Committee should enter unprejudiced upon the investigation of the cause. At the same time he stated, that as the decision was of more than ordinary importance, he was of opinion that the petition should take precedence of others; accordingly it was ordered to be heard to-morrow, and to ensure the attendance of Members, the House was also ordered to be called over. Now after these arrangements were made, what did Mr. Thellusson require? That the ballot should be deferred till Friday. He was

confident, however, that the House would not agree to the motion when they considered the serious inconvenience with which it would be attended to the witnesses, who were already summoned to appear to-morrow, and the chance there was if the call was disposed of to-morrow, that they would not be able to make a House before Christmas. If the honourable gentleman persisted in pressing his motion, he would certainly take the sense of the House upon it.

Mr. PETER THELLUSSON said, his brother had necessarily been out of town, which had prevented his being prepared.

Mr. GREY insisted on the inconvenience and expence to which the petitioner would be exposed, if the measure of postponing the petition was adopted. The witnesses were many of them out of town: for these summonses had been issued, and those summonses had been served at considerable cost. Now summonses would be necessary: and if the trouble of serving those summonses was great at first, it would be much increased, by the circumstances of the witnesses being apprized that they were to be served, and keeping out of the way.

Mr. Chancellor PITT was not of the same opinion as Mr. Grey. The delay which was proposed was not more than for about forty-eight hours: and with respect to the argument which had been used, that a longer notice of Mr. Thelluffon's wishes should have been given, he thought it was impossible, a fortnight ago, to have foreseen causes which might have rendered so short a delay as that which was solicited necessary. As to the objection which Mr. Whitbread had urged, that the petitioner had only received notice of the intended motion in the morning, that had no weight; the order which it was moved to discharge was made without any notice having been given to Mr. Thelluffon; nor did he think what had been urged respecting the attendance of the witnesses deserved much attention. The House was always willing to save individuals from unnecessary trouble; but he supposed it to be of little consequence to them, whether they came to that House, from a place no farther off than the borough of Southwark, on Wednesday or on Friday. Mr. Tierney's personal inconvenience, where he was so much interested, could hardly be urged; and if it was urged, it would hardly be considered as a sufficient reason. It was not his wish, when an application for time was made to the House, to speak to the merits of the case; but he heard, that one of the points in the petition was a point of law, and turned upon an alledged disqualification, arising out of the decision of the Committee on the former election. This he understood to be one of

the grounds of the petition, and it was on this account that it gained a priority. Now, if the petition should be heard on Tuesday, he knew not how this would expedite the business, as the motion was not intended to be made on the former report, unless it could be supposed that the petition, thus complicated in law and fact, would be decided before the recess. If he had ever heard a case in which an application for time was reasonable, it was the present.

Mr. WHITBREAD explained, and said, that if the motion to delay was pressed, he should certainly divide the House.

Mr. FOX thought the sitting Member had had sufficient time to gain information, and that it was unreasonable to put it off, as the day had been fixed for trying it according to the direction of a positive law. He observed, on Mr. Thellusson's not having direct notice given him of the petition, that the honourable gentleman's own mind must have told him that a petition would be presented. The House had appointed an early day; and after this was done, he thought they should abide by it. It was not Mr. Tierney's personal inconvenience, or his coming to town, nor was it the issuing of new summonses, nor the service of them, that was alone to be considered; but if delay was granted in the present instance, he knew not when it could be refused. The Members of the House would suffer full as much inconvenience as the petitioner and his witnesses; and though gentlemen were bound to do their duty, that duty should be rendered as light as possible; and the Judges had a claim to be accommodated as well as the parties. If it was thought proper to put off this Election Committee, much difficulty would arise to many gentlemen on whose vacation it would trespass. From what the House had seen in the case of Morris, it was not certain that all the witnesses from the Borough would attend. One material part of the petition was, indeed, a point of law, the construction of an act of Parliament; if the whole of the petition turned on this, then indeed it might be more shortly decided, and the delay might be admitted; but there were other allegations, and he thought he ought to press the earliest day for their being heard.

Mr. W. DUNDAS said, that a delay of about two days was all that was sought, and that the argument which was urged against granting it, where it would be highly convenient, was the loss of two days pleasure to some of the gentlemen who might form the Committee. To the witnesses it must certainly be indifferent whether they came to the House of Commons on Wednesday or on Friday. The great danger which had been urged of the possibility

of not making a House sufficiently numerous on Friday did not strike him ; for how easy was it to adjourn the call to that day, and then they were just as sure as on any other day.

Mr. GRENVILLE was against adjourning the petition. He thought it militated against the spirit of that bill which bore his great ancestor's name.

The House divided on the question of postponing the consideration of the petition to Friday.

For the motion, 93 ; against it, 60.—Majority, 33.

General FITZPATRICK said, that as the House was to be engaged in the discussion of a question of great public importance, he should defer his motion relative to General La Fayette till Friday.

Mr. Alderman COMBE said, that he had received information that attempts had already been made within the city of London to levy the additional 5 per cent. and 10 per cent. on certain custom duties before these taxes had in any shape obtained the approbation of the House, and he wished to know whether any authority for this purpose had been given at the Treasury ?

Mr. ROSE said, that certainly no such authority had been given.

Mr. GREY said, the measures now complained of had last year been put in practice, and he himself had called the attention of the House to it, especially in the instance of the wine tax. Since the unjust and oppressive system of imposing retrospective taxes had been introduced, a more violent stretch of power had never been attempted, and which, if permitted, directly went to destroy the privileges of the House.

Mr. ROSE declared, that it was not intended that either the 5 or 10 per cent. additional duties should take place till the acts passed. Information that such duties would take place had, indeed, been communicated to the Commissioners of the Customs and Excise, who were left to pursue their measures accordingly ; but they had received no orders to the effect mentioned from the Lords of the Treasury.

Mr. GREY said, that the same assertion had last year been brought forward, although the case had actually been as he stated to the House.

Mr. Grey then said, that, as the subject of advance to the Emperor would soon be the object of discussion, he wished to know if any interest had yet been paid upon the loan which had been granted to the Emperor. The interest for the first year had been allowed when the loan itself was given ; but there was no informa-

tion yet in the possession of the House with regard to the payment of interest for the subsequent period.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that the honourable gentleman might move, that an account should be laid before the House upon the subject concerning which he asked information.

Mr. GREY then moved, "That there be laid before the House, an account of the sums received in payment of the interest on the Imperial loan, and the manner in which it had been received." Ordered.

Mr. W. SMITH said, that last year he had moved for an address to His Majesty, for certain papers, which had not yet been laid before the House; he should therefore move, "That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, praying that he would graciously be pleased to give orders for laying before the House copies of the different acts for the regulation of slaves, which had been transmitted from the colonies, for the approbation of His Majesty, since the year 1788." Agreed to.

Tuesday, 13th December.

Mr. Alderman COMBE repeated the assertion he made yesterday, respecting the collecting of the new duties of 5 and 10 per cent. upon the customs. He was authorized, he said, to repeat it, and was enabled to insist on the truth of it, by the very accurate information which he had received on the subject; and he could assure the House, that those duties were collected both on Saturday last and yesterday.

Mr. ROSE was positive that no orders had as yet been issued at the Custom-house for the collection of the duties alluded to. A public notice had indeed been given by letter to the Officers of the Longroom, stating the articles on which the duties were to be raised, and when and in what manner such regulations were to attach. Mr. Rose read the letter, from which it appeared that no order was implied for collecting such duties till after the acts for raising them should have been passed into law. The Commissioners of the Customs had been asked, whether the duties of 5 and 10 per cent. should be collected immediately? To which an answer was given in the negative; and he was warranted in saying, that in one case only had this duty been taken, and then it was ordered to be restored to the party concerned.

Mr. WHITBREAD said, he was desirous to be informed when the Spanish declaration of war was signed, and when it was received? and also what was the date of His Majesty's answer to it?

which he was surprised had not been communicated to the House at an earlier period.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he could not exactly inform the honourable gentleman what was the date of the declaration of war of the Court of Madrid, nor could he have laid that declaration before the House, until he had received an official communication of it.

Mr. WHITBREAD then moved, "That there be laid before the House the date of the Spanish declaration of war, the date when it was received, and also the date of the answer to it." Ordered.

Mr. GREY said, that His Imperial Majesty was not only bound to pay the interest of the sums he had already received from this country, but he was also to be punctual in paying certain sums yearly, about sixty thousand pounds sterling, towards forming a sinking fund for the extinction of the capital. It was his wish, therefore, to be informed if the Emperor had punctually fulfilled these engagements, and particularly if he had remitted any sums for the extinction of the debt.

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied, that there was no regular official mode by which this information could be accurately obtained. The sinking fund to be formed by His Imperial Majesty, was a transaction, of which no public board in this country took any cognizance, nor from which consequently any light could be derived respecting the execution of that engagement. The interest paid on the loan, and whatever sums may be paid towards the extinction of the principal, were to be accounted for by an agent of His Imperial Majesty, from whom only this information could be procured; and he would have an application made to him, in order to obtain this knowledge.

Mr. GREY contended, that the House ought to be vigilant in watching the execution of these engagements; and that they should as anxiously inquire into what sums had been remitted by the Emperor, as well as into what sums had been paid him by the English nation on the loan of 1795.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he could give no explicit information on this particular; all that could be afforded, the honourable gentleman would be furnished with by means of the former order, without making any new motion to that effect.

Mr. GREY then moved, "That an account be laid before the House of what sums had been remitted by His Imperial Majesty towards the discharge of the principal of the debt incurred by the loan of 1795." Ordered.

Mr. FOX moved for an account of the sums remitted to Colonel Craufurd, and the bills drawn by him, with their respective dates.

Sir WILLIAM PULTENEY moved for an account of the dates of the bills remitted for the use of the Emperor. Agreed to.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS moved the order of the day on His Majesty's message, announcing the declaration of war on the part of Spain.

The order of the day being read,

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, that by His Majesty's command he had laid before the House the declaration of war by the Court of Madrid, and an answer on the part of this Government to the allegations contained in that declaration. Under those circumstances the House must perceive the necessity and propriety of affording the most vigorous support to the Executive Government; and he conceived that it was necessary for him to add nothing farther to procure the unanimous support of the House to the address which he had now to propose. If any additional information was wanted on the subject, there would be ample occasion in future to propose any inquiries for that purpose, and it would then rest with the discretion of the House to decide, whether it was fit that such information should be granted; but at present he conceived that he should meet with no opposition to the motion:

“ That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, to return His Majesty the thanks of this House for his most gracious communication :

“ To express to His Majesty the concern which this House feels, in common with His Majesty, at finding that His Majesty's endeavours to preserve peace with Spain, and to adjust all matters in discussion with that country, by an amicable negotiation, have been rendered ineffectual by an abrupt and unprovoked declaration of war on the part of the Catholic King :

“ To assure His Majesty, that, while we cannot but concur with him, in lamenting that such an addition should be made to the calamities of war, already extending over so great a part of Europe, we share at the same time in the satisfaction which His Majesty feels in reflecting, that nothing has been omitted on his part, which could contribute to the maintenance of peace, on grounds consistent with the honour of his crown, and the interests of his dominions :

“ And humbly to entreat His Majesty, to place the most entire reliance upon the support of his faithful Commons on so important an occasion, and to be persuaded that no exertion shall be wanting,

on our part, which can, under the protection of Divine Providence, enable His Majesty effectually to repel this unprovoked aggression, and to afford, to all Europe, an additional proof of the spirit and resources of the British nation."

Mr. FOX. I rise for one to express my perfect concurrence in the sentiments of the present address. At the same time I cannot but consider the event to which it alludes, a war with Spain, as a serious addition to the calamities of this country, and as affording a new source of regret, amidst the many disasters which we have been called to deplore in the course of the present contest. And at this moment I cannot help thinking, how very ill Ministers have calculated with respect to the consequences of the contest. The very gentleman, who has now stood forward to suggest to you the propriety and necessity of agreeing to the present address, at the commencement of the war, and in order to induce the House to embark in the measures which were then adopted by Administration, asserted that we were in a situation in which we had only to encounter the opposition of France, and in which we might expect for the concurrence of almost the whole of Europe. This, among others, is a striking proof of the blindness of those counsels by which we were led into the present war. There are some parts of this address which meet with my warmest approbation; we are told that every thing has been done to avoid the calamity of war. Can Ministers say the same thing with respect to the war undertaken against France? I hope that this sentiment will be adopted in every future address on the subject of war, and that every possible step will be adopted, in order to preserve tranquillity, before Ministers have recourse to the desperate measure of plunging the country into all the evils of hostility. It is such a conduct alone which can render any war just, politic and necessary. I have only to add, that, though, perhaps, the declaration of war on the part of Spain could not have been communicated sooner, I think that the House have scarcely been treated with proper respect, as they have had no intimation of the measures which might have led Ministers to expect such a declaration. I cheerfully give my vote to the present address, on the supposition, that the assertion, with respect to every step having been taken to avert hostility, is strictly true; at the same time, notwithstanding the sanguine language talked out of doors, I cannot but consider a war with Spain as a great addition to the calamities of the country.

The question on the address was then put, and carried *nem. con.*

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he had to bring forward a bill, the object of which was in every point of view so eligible, that except some express objection was started, he should, without farther

preface, introduce it to the attention of the House. He therefore moved, "That leave be given to bring in a bill for the more speedily paying navy, transport, and victualling bills."

Mr. FOX did not understand precisely what was the limitation of their currency, but it appeared in general that the time of payment would take place within three months from their date. Now if that were to be the case, he supposed the right honourable gentleman would take care to be provided at the time when they should fall due, by the regular supplies or votes of credit. But if a long recess of Parliament ensued, or there should be any error in the amount of the provision for their payment, he feared that Government would risque some inconvenience by this measure, in not having any fund to defray the bills when they became due; and therefore he suggested this opinion to the House, that he might know by what means this inconvenience was to be avoided.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, it would be a proper period to make these comments when the bill came to be discussed. A currency of three months only appeared to him at present to be the best mode of supporting public credit, and affording relief to individuals, inasmuch as the payment would be nearly equivalent to ready money. In regard to navy bills, six months might elapse before they would be paid, although they would be floating no longer than three months in the market, and in regard to the other observations of the right Honourable gentleman, if great and unforeseen necessities should arise, it might be prudent to extend the time of payment.

Mr. FOX said, if he understood the right honourable gentleman rightly, six months might elapse before navy bills became due after the time of their being issued, although they would not be more than three months in the market. In that case, he trusted, some security for the payment was to be given to the person to whom they should be delivered. In regard to the occasional extent of currency, in great and unforeseen expences, he was apprehensive great objections would arise, since the bill in that case would not destroy the evil for which it was intended; but, whilst it created new inconveniences, would tolerate the old ones, in suffering the bills to accumulate a heavy rate of interest and discount, by running to the same extent as formerly.

Leave was given to bring in the bill; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Lords of the Treasury, Mr. Rose, and Mr. Long, were desired to prepare and bring in the same.

The SECRETARY AT WAR said, that last night a learned gentleman had complained warmly of the improper intervention of a party of the military at Northampton. As he at that time knew

nothing of the circumstance, he could say nothing upon the subject. He had alluded to a similar complaint which had last year been made by a noble Lord, when after an investigation of the particulars, it appeared, that an application had been made by a Magistrate for the interference of the troops, that thanks had been returned to the War Office for their attention to the request, and to the troops for their seasonable assistance on the occasion. In the present instance he had found that an application had been made from the Lord Lieutenant of the county to the Secretary of State for the assistance of a military force, as considerable apprehension was entertained with respect to the probability of some disturbance. This application had in the usual way been transmitted to the War Office, and the necessary steps of consequence were taken to comply with the request. He believed, however, that there was a gentleman present much better qualified to speak to the circumstances and result of the whole transaction.

Mr. POWYS said, that if blame attached any where on this occasion, it was not to his right honourable friend, or to the War Office, but to the Lord Lieutenant and the Magistracy of the county of Northampton. The troops were sent in consequence of an application from the Lord Lieutenant, Deputy Lieutenants, and Magistrates of the county, stating, that tumultuous proceedings had taken place in that quarter, and that the civil power was not sufficient for the preservation of the peace. The commander of this regiment of cavalry, who was a Member of that House, offered to take whatever steps the Magistrates might think the most effectual to preserve the tranquillity of the county.

At the meeting before mentioned, the Commanding Officer was desired to apply to the War Office for leave to distribute the force under his command in such a manner as the Magistrates might think proper. Leave was accordingly applied for, and granted. At a meeting of the Magistrates afterwards, they took upon themselves to make such arrangements as seemed to them necessary. He could say nothing about the behaviour of these troops at that time, for he was not present; but if they had misconducted themselves, it would have come to his ears, and it would form a very strong contrast to the general behaviour of these troops, for which they were entitled to the thanks of the county.

Mr. JEKYLL said, that notwithstanding the stile in which the Secretary of War had last night thought proper to treat the subject which he had then brought forward, and which, without much coarseness of language, he conceived himself entitled to say rather bordered on flippancy, the right honourable gentleman had regarded

it, however, as a matter of sufficient consequence to be again brought forward. What he had last night stated, rested on the authority of a letter of the utmost publicity, and which had hitherto remained uncontradicted. The letter mentioned, that the appellants had, in breach of the law, been obstructed by the military, while proceeding to exercise their right of appeal; and that Mr. Wodhall felt so indignant at this outrage that he had resigned his office of Deputy Lieutenant. The Magistrates in one district had surely no right to call out the military to control the proceedings of a different district; nor were any body of Magistrates, with a Lord Lieutenant at their head, justified in bringing forward a military force to dragoon the people, for he could find no other phrase for such conduct. We had often heard of a vigour beyond the law; and now it seemed that the period was arrived when this beautiful theory was reduced to practice.

Mr. POWYS said, the learned gentleman was mistaken in supposing that this measure was undertaken by the Magistrates of the other districts, without the concurrence of those belonging to that particular district. The meeting consisted of the Lord Lieutenant, Deputy Lieutenant, and Magistrates of the whole county; and it was upon the representation of a Magistrate of this very district, that this application had been made; for he stated, that there were symptoms of tumult in that district and the neighbourhood. The learned gentleman thought he had discharged his duty in bringing forward this business; but he had only discharged it in part; for if he still thought there was any grounds for complaint, he should bring it forward in a distinct motion, and call for the necessary proofs.

Sir WILLIAM DOLBEN rose to confirm the statement made by the honourable gentleman who spoke last. This application was made at the desire of a general meeting. It was therefore a most unjust accusation to say, that they were sent to dragoon the people. He thought the force of the country could not be better employed, than in assisting the civil power, when it was resisted by those seditious spirits who wished to dragoon their betters; but he hoped they were now silent for ever.

Lord WILLIAM RUSSELL said, he conceived the explanation which had been given, was not at all to the purpose. It was said, that the Magistrates had applied that these troops might be sent; but did it appear that there was any tumult? Nothing of the kind was stated; and the Magistrates of that district declared, they had not sent for them. He regarded the present as one of those instances in which the interference of the military had been

unwarrantably employed. He considered every such instance a pregnant with alarm at a moment like the present, when there seemed to be an intention to subvert the established principles of the Constitution, and to introduce in their stead a military government. He then adverted to the business at Odiham, which had been introduced on a former occasion by a relation of his, who he said, would not have introduced a charge, unless there was some foundation for it.

Colonel VILLIERS requested the indulgence of the House for a few moments. He said, he was not with the troops upon this occasion, but he received very authentic information, that if the troops had not been sent that day, the Magistrates would not have been able to transact any business. The very able and experienced officer who commanded the detachment sent upon that occasion, had told him, that a considerable mob, who were coming to the spot armed, had retired when they understood that there was a force in readiness to quell any disturbance that might be attempted.

Mr. FOX said, that it appeared that every fact advanced by his learned friend, has been correctly stated. It might be proper that there should be troops in readiness to be called out; but they surely ought not to have proceeded to act, except their assistance was expressly required by the civil power. It was a most strange circumstance, that the Magistrates in one district should send a military force to wait upon Magistrates in another district. He conceived the House to be much indebted to his learned friend for having brought forward the subject, particularly at a period when so much alacrity was shown in having recourse to this preventive expedient of bringing forward a military force on every occasion.

Mr. POWYS said, he would take upon himself to assert, that a gentleman belonging to that district had declared that there were symptoms of tumult in that part, and in consequence of that representation the application was made.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, there was no motion regularly before the House; but so much having been said upon the subject, he should, he trusted, be excused for adding a few words. He begged the House to look at the question as it then stood, and compare it with the manner in which it was originally introduced. The House was told by the learned gentleman, that he brought forward this business as a complaint against the War Office, for having sent these troops without any ground whatever, or any application having been made for that purpose; it now turned out, that the steps taken by the War Office were in consequence of the application of the Lord Lieutenant, the Deputy Lieutenants, and the whole

collected Magistracy of the county. But the learned gentleman had declared himself unable to find any other words descriptive of the transaction, as it now stood, but that of "dragooning the people." If the learned gentleman wanted an apology for using words which conveyed an idea the very reverse of the facts as they now appeared, the only one he could resort to with any propriety was, that "he could not find any other words," for otherwise the House would never be able to account for his using the expression, "dragooning the people!" in a case where it turned out that the troops were sent at the request, and to be under the direction of the Magistrates to enforce the law of the country. A noble Lord who had spoken upon this subject, had declared, that troops employed by the civil power for the preservation of the peace, afforded him no other idea but that of an attempt to subvert the principles of the Constitution by introducing a military government. He said, he would not attempt to reply to them; he could only say, that he felt considerable regret that he was not able to enrich the language of the one, or the ideas of the other; with this observation he should pass to the next charge, which was now transferred from the War Office to the Magistrates of the county—that which was originally meant as a complaint against Ministers, was now converted into an assertion, that the Magistrates ought not to call in the assistance of the military to enable them to execute the decrees of the Legislature. The next charge was, that the zeal of the Officer who had the command of the troops, had fully co-operated with the civil power; so that not only the conduct but the distribution of the soldiery had been directed by the Magistrates; and arrangements taken in order to render it unnecessary for the troops to be employed, was termed "dragooning the people." As to the troops being sent to that part, it appeared that the application not only came from the whole county, but that it was made upon the representation of a gentleman belonging to that very district. The House were informed by the Commanding Officer, that these appellants who were prevented from coming up, were an armed mob, assembled for the purpose of interrupting the proceedings—this was a faithful state of the transaction, and he left it to the House to determine whether it deserved such language as had been applied to it. If gentlemen were not satisfied, he could only wish they would fix a day for going more minutely into the business.

Mr. GREY contended, that the right honourable gentleman had by no means given a faithful account of this business; but had indulged himself rather in sarcasms than in facts. He had no other authority upon this subject than the letter of Mr. Woodhall, which

he contended, was not contradicted. That letter stated, that Magistrates were interrupted in the execution of their duty by the troops, who had not been sent for by them; and that they would not suffer the appellants to come up. He would not now consider whether the War Office was to blame or not; but certainly the troops had acted in an unconstitutional manner, for the constables stated, that the soldiers would not permit the appellants to pass. He could not conceive how the right honourable gentleman could call the appellants an armed mob, or confound them with a tumultuous assemblage, if there was any mob at all. He was, upon the whole, of opinion, that this was a most unconstitutional measure, and thought that the honourable gentleman who brought it forward was intitled to the thanks of the House.

Colonel VILLIERS said, he was very well informed that a large mob was marching to that place, and would have proceeded if they had not seen the military; and the constables declared that they would not have been able to preserve peace if it had not been for the troops. He did not mean to throw any aspersions upon Mr. Wodhall; but it appeared to him, that his letter contained a very imperfect account of the transaction. As far as he personally was concerned, the only part he wished to take was, to act under the authority of the Magistrates, and to make a temperate use of the military power.

After some desultory conversation, a member called to order, as there was no question before the House, and the discussion was suffered to drop.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved for leave to bring in a bill to explain and amend an act, that had passed in the present session for the purpose of augmenting the militia.

Mr. FOX said he should move an amendment, that, instead of "explain and amend," should be inserted the word "repeal." He conceived the bill to be so objectionable, that he had no difficulty in saying it would be wasting the time of the House to enter into detail upon the subject. He appealed to the House whether, after what they had heard of what had taken place in Northamptonshire, and various other places, they were not convinced it was a measure which had excited a general discontent in the country? So, he thought that, by continuing such a bill, we should do something more calculated to favour than to defeat the designs of our enemies, the bill being, as he apprehended it to be, generally disliked, especially among the lower classes of the people. However laudible the intention of officers might be, it could not be put into execution without very great inconvenience, and the advantages

it at best would be very trifling. He, therefore, without enlarging on the matter, moved, That, instead of the words "explain" and amend," be inserted the word "repeal." He should not, however, take the sense of the House upon his motion, unless some other gentleman should require it.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR seconded the amendment.

Mr. JOLIFFE said, that he rose to express his approbation of the amendment which had been moved. He was convinced that, in case of any invasion being attempted in the country, every person would, without compulsion, be ready to take arms in its defence. The present measure had occasioned no small dissatisfaction in the country, and to excite such a disposition in the people would certainly tend to defeat the object of internal security. He did not wish that Ministers should be rendered unpopular; and if they were anxious to avoid this consequence, they would, for their own sakes, look to the state of the country, and consider the effects which the measure might produce by counteracting the design for which it was intended.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, that he could scarcely believe that the right honourable gentleman seriously imagined that the arguments he had used would induce the House to reject the measure which it was proposed to adopt; and he should not have troubled the House with any observations upon the bill, if he had not heard some things which fell from another honourable member, and which seemed to be offered so seriously and forcibly, that he thought himself bound to say a few words in reply.

The principal grounds of opposition which had been taken to this bill, were the dissatisfaction and discontents it was supposed to excite in the country. He would beg leave, however, to remind the House, and particularly those gentlemen who were too young to recollect the fact, that when the plan of a Militia was first suggested, which since, in the opinion of all, was admitted to be our true Constitutional defence, and the best guardian of our security, it had encountered an opposition more general and unequivocal, more resolute and determined, than any which had been displayed upon the present occasion. This much, however, he would venture to say, that if any measure was found by the Legislature to be necessary for the welfare of the country, it ought not to be given up merely because those for whose good it was intended, did not perceive its advantages, or resisted its operation. For his own part, he considered that it would most highly conduce to the security of the country, if measures of defence were put upon a larger scale; and if all men throughout the kingdom taught themselves the use

of arms, that when any danger rendered the exertion necessary, it might be able, as well as willing, to contribute their assistance. He thought that to-day he might congratulate gentlemen upon the other side on having got up their spirits. At present they seem to be perfectly free from the apprehension of danger. He hoped, however, they would not be lions one day and hares the next. He hoped they would act with some consistency in their cries of alarm and their assertions of security. One day they expatiated upon danger with which the country in certain circumstances might be threatened. When Holland was likely to be over-run by the victorious arms of France, it was said upon the other side that the danger which was apprehended from this event was a mere bug-bear; while again they represented the circumstances after it had actually occurred, as of so much importance as to threaten the safety of the country. If the possession of Holland by the French could justify the apprehension of danger, there was still ground of alarm. Some months ago, when the armies of our allies were flying before the victorious armies of France, apprehensions were entertained that if the enemy succeeded in subduing the force of Austria, an attempt of invasion would be made. In consequence of the success which attended for a time their operations, there was no one who did not believe that when the French had succeeded in humbling the House of Austria, they entertained ideas of employing the forces which they would then have at their disposal in a descent upon this country. He appealed to the House whether this proposition had not been announced. It still was his solemn conviction that such a design was in agitation; and he should say, that he was a bold man that in the event to which he alluded would maintain, that the attempt of a descent would not have been made on Great Britain or Ireland.

[Here Mr. M. A. Taylor whispered, that it was in Ireland the Ministers apprehended the danger of invasion.]

Mr. Dundas continued, that Ministers had, indeed, apprehended danger of an invasion upon Ireland; but they had apprehended it in this country also. Still there was reason to believe that the scheme was not abandoned. He knew for certain, that at present the ports of France were full of boats, and that troops were in readiness for such an attempt. In circumstances like these, would it be said that we ought not to prepare against the undertaking; that we ought not to take measures for the public safety? He could not but be astonished too, that any objection should be made to measures by which the security of the country was to be promoted at such a critical period as the present. While a negotiation was pend-

by which His Majesty's Ministers were pledged to exert every effort for the restoration of peace, did the right honourable gentleman mean to tell the enemy that we were not prepared for our internal defence, and invite them to an attack, by the display of our defenceless situation? To add weight, therefore, to the negotiations for peace, we ought, by our financial arrangements, by the formidable state of our military and naval power, and by our exertions for internal defence, to shew that, if the enemy refused to accede to fair and honourable terms, we were prepared to resist any enterprise they might undertake, and to annoy them in every quarter of the world. It was extraordinary too, that, when a new enemy was this night announced, when we were called upon to provide for this new emergency, the first fruits of the promised support were propositions on the part of the right honourable gentleman to render our means of security less than when that enemy did not exist. His firm opinion was, that this country ought never to be at war without adopting that systematic plan of increasing our strength which would at once render us formidable abroad and secure at home. This alone could enable us to act with vigour, and to display our resources with effect; this alone would enable us to prosecute war with success, and compel the enemy to agree to honourable conditions of peace.

Mr. WALPOLE asked, If it was meant to introduce any clause to grant exceptions to those districts where a certain number of persons had voluntarily come forward?

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, every attention should be paid to that point; but, to give any exception to a particular district would operate in favour of those who had not acted in this manner.

Mr. M. A. TAYLOR said, that he now rose to assign his reasons for seconding the amendment of his honourable friend, and the grounds of his opposition to the present measure. He would say, that he did not think that an invasion of this country was likely. He was convinced that Ministers themselves did not consider it to be probable. He had conversed with several intelligent naval and military officers upon the subject, and he had been informed that it would be difficult to land 5000 men; and was it likely that the French, acquainted with the dispositions of the people of the country, and with the military resources which they possessed, would sacrifice so many men upon so absurd an enterprise? He supported the amendment of his right honourable friend, because he conceived the measure calculated to defeat the object of defence. When the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) came forward, as he so frequently did, to amend his bills, he would tell him, upon

the present occasion, that the best mode of securing the country from invasion, was to conciliate the minds of the people. He himself had seen the discontents which the bills had excited. The inhabitants of the populous place of the country where he resided were particularly averse to the measure; and when they were told that they might fine or procure substitutes, they declared they would do neither. It was attended with very oppressive consequences to the farmer, for after lists had been given in, their servants removed from one place of the country to another, to avoid being drawn, and subjected their masters to great inconveniences. It was a severe burden upon the middling classes, who found it no trifling matter to procure substitutes. The right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) might laugh, but it was certainly of little moment to him, for he had places enow to enable him to pay the expences, and he might not be disposed to consider the situation of others. For his part he was not like the honourable gentleman (Mr. Joliffe), for he wished to alienate the minds of the people from Ministers, because the measures they pursued tended to alienate the people from the Government. He wished to live and die peaceably, and he was sorry when he saw any measures taken by Ministers that could contribute to unsettle the minds of the people, and alienate them from His Majesty. The right honourable gentleman said now, that it was proper that all the people in the country should be armed, though formerly he had stated that there were many dangerous and disaffected persons whom it would be imprudent to arm. For his own part, he had no such views with respect to the necessity of the period, and he decidedly disapproved of the measure proposed to be adopted.

. General TARLTON said, that the situation of the country was now very different from what it was some months ago. The reverses of the French had deranged every plan of invasion which they could have entertained. The real mode of securing the country was to render the people contented, happy, and free, instead of harassing them with unnecessary burdens. No design was now entertained by the enemy; their forces were removed from the coast. He considered the present measure as calculated, in case of emergency, to produce confusion without adding to our strength. The House ought to be cautious of entertaining a bill which imposed such burdens. It was dangerous to invest Ministers with the power which this force would confer. In its present shape, though inefficient, yet it might be rendered efficient by an act of Parliament. Nay, it might be done now-a-days without an act of Parliament—Ministers might render the body of men proposed to be raised under

the bill a standing force without any object of necessity or advantage. It was part of a system introduced into this country by Ministers to increase the power of the Crown ; and along with the measures which they had employed to connect the army more intimately with the executive power, instead of maintaining their dependence on the House, formed another step towards a military government ; by arming one sixth part of the community, Ministers wished to convert them into engines of robbing the remainder.

Sir WILLIAM PULTENEY said, that he did not agree with those who represented this bill as a vexatious measure. The only thing that he had to disapprove of was, that this measure was not so extensive as, in his opinion, it ought to be. He believed, if this bill was generally understood not to require the taking of men to a great distance from their homes, there would be little or no opposition to it any where. But the idea of taking men to a great distance from the places of their usual labour might occasion some discontent. This measure, in its nature, resembled, in some degree, the establishment of the militia. That establishment, it was well known, was a great source of strength to the country in a military view, and a great support also to the Constitution ; for if the people are all unarmed, and a Prince wishes to enslave them, and has a large military force at his command, the people are, in a great measure, at his mercy. That can never be the case when the people have arms in their hands. He remembered when the subject of a militia was agitated in Parliament, the Ministers of the day were averse to the measure ; but on the other side of the House there was a great cry in favour of the measure. He thought that the object of this bill was the same in principle, and therefore he approved of it. He had conversed with many military men, for whose judgment he had great respect, and they thought there might be some danger of invasion. He conceived that there was an absolute necessity for this, as a measure of defence. If we are called upon, he had no doubt but that every man would come forward in defence of the country ; but in the mean time it was proper that as many as could, should be properly prepared, in case of necessity. This was a corps merely intended to be in readiness. They would suffer no inconvenience at all. They would each have a shilling a day, nearly double the pay of other soldiers. Upon the whole he believed that, with the exception of a few discontented people, the mass of the inhabitants of this country would approve of this measure. He believed they wished to resist the enemy by all means. He therefore wished to see this measure tried ; for he had a decided opinion in its favour. He approved of what

had been said upon arming all the people of this country, and of teaching them the use of arms. We had before us the example of the effects of such a measure in America and in Switzerland; they had supported their Governments, because they approved of their Governments; and without their approbation, certainly these Governments could not exist. He approved of this measure of arming the people as far as it went. Sixty thousand men were a considerable number, but he wished it was much larger.

Sir WILLIAM GEARY said, he rose to rescue the people of England from the charge of being hostile to the measure, for he was convinced that they entertained different sentiments. Within his observation he had seen no dislike to the bill; he had seen the reverse. Some symptoms of disapprobation were said to exist in Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, but they did not exist to any extent. He would not say that gentlemen had, from any bad intention, endeavoured to obstruct the operation of the bill, but they did not consider what might be the effect of their example. It was said that no apprehension could now be entertained; but any individual who reflected on the nature of the enemy we had to oppose, whom this country, to its eternal honour, and to the salvation of Europe, had stood forward to combat, would hesitate before he asserted that the design might not be revived. For his own part, he was firmly convinced that the attempt might be made, and that every measure of precaution ought to be taken.

The question upon the amendment of Mr. Fox was then put, and negatived without a division.

Mr. Chancellor PITT rose to make a similar motion with respect to the act which had been passed this session for raising twenty thousand cavalry. He stated, that he had had many opportunities of consulting with gentlemen who, from their habits and from their situations, were the best informed on subjects of this kind, and who were most conversant with the nature of the particular law which was to be carried into effect. He had been happy to learn from them, that though difficulties might exist, these difficulties had been greatly exaggerated by the gentlemen of Opposition; that they partly arose from misunderstanding, and that they might easily be corrected by the introduction of a few clauses. The only thing which he thought created a leading and important difficulty, was the omission of a power to appeal on an alledged title to exemption before ballot. This, as it at present stood, by no means rendered the act impracticable, since a remedy was provided, by which, when any class became defective, a mode of supplying the deficiency was pointed out. But what would more effectually put an end to the

inconvenience arising from the trouble of a fresh ballot, would be to add to the former provisions of the law, a right to the person who claimed the exemption to lodge his appeal previous to the ballot.

From what he had just heard from the honourable gentlemen, who had spoken, he thought there were fresh grounds for approving the principle of the act which it was now proposed to amend ; the measure had been judged necessary when it was at first brought forward ; and so far from conceiving that its necessity was shaken by any arguments that he had heard, he could not discover any change in the circumstances of the country which in the smallest degree affected it. When the question of the general policy of internal defence was admitted, and it could not be contested in times like the present, there remained but two points to be examined—whether the measure contributed, in a great degree, to the purposes of protection? and whether it bore more heavily, as a public burden, than was fairly to be expected from what promised to be of such extensive utility? He had heard the prudence of the plan impeached ; and it had been said that it was inefficient, because the men raised under its operation were not to be trained ; and thus, not partaking of the advantages of discipline, they would be of little assistance in the hour of danger. This was rather an objection than a fair argument against it. Those who urged it, seemed to be aware of no medium between the two questions—whether, when a force was wanting, the whole ought to be gained at first ; or whether the safety of the country should be trusted to men entirely without preparation? Every gentleman in the House would see the advantages which must result to the country in the hour of danger from such a body of men, though they might never have been called out to exercise. It was convenient to know to whom to have recourse in that hour ; what arms were at hand ; what number of horses, and their accoutrements ; what was the force to be expected ; what proportion of it belonged to each district or party ; how it was to be collected, and how it might be distributed ; how the officers were to be selected, and how many they were to be in number. To all these advantages to be derived from a force thus raised, he could not consider it as a sufficient argument that they were not a regular force ; it was desirable to be in possession of it, not merely to assist us in the moment of attack, but to prevent, by a display of our strength, such a moment from every arriving. It was, perhaps, inferior to a body of regular cavalry, but on some occasions this inferiority would be found very small, and in many things it was equal. Men, provided with horses and with arms, could, in some

situations, effect as much by these advantages, as could be hoped from the best disciplined and most perfect regiment.

The next question related to the burden which it was said this measure laid on the people ; and a greater degree of exaggeration he believed had never been witnessed in the House than that which the gentlemen of opposition had adopted, when speaking on this part of the cavalry act. No man was called upon by it to contribute his personal service or his pecuniary aid, unless he had given proof of his competence, by keeping a horse, for which he paid the duties imposed by the act of Parliament on horses kept for the purposes of pleasure. The inconvenience was besides very small: it would not amount to more than the payment of one-tenth part of the expence of furnishing a horseman. The extra expence of keeping such a horse as would, in point of quality, satisfy the Deputy Lieutenants of the County, would be inconsiderable to the class of persons whom the act was intended to reach. The extra expences which would be incurred by the person balloted could not be great, and the allowance would be sufficient to answer them: when he was called out for actual service he would receive full pay; and the Deputy Lieutenant of the county would be empowered to make him such an allowance for his attendance at the time of being mustered, as he should in his discretion think proper. The only expence which would be incurred by the person would be, that of the uniform: for he would be provided with arms at the cost of Government. The estimate which he had seen of the price of an uniform, and which there was reason to believe was accurate, was two pounds nine shillings; and it did not appear to him that this sum was very great, when it was to be divided among ten persons of such a description as that which the act pointed out. From this statement, the House would be able to judge whether what they had heard from the gentlemen opposite to him on former occasions, with respect to this measure, was accurate, and whether it was the grievance which they had so loudly asserted it to be. In the persuasion that it would not be thought so by the House, he moved, "That the clauses in the original act, by which a power was reserved to the House of amending and adding to it during the session," should be read; and after this was done, he moved, "For leave to bring in a bill to explain and amend the former cavalry act."

Colonel HARCOURT, after apologizing for the presumption of adding to what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, declared, that he considered a rallying point as the most material thing wanting in case of danger, and that he had known troops run

to it with great alacrity. He was far from disputing the necessity of discipline. It suited not his profession, nor his inclination to do so. He hoped his character in the army would bear testimony for him, that he was a friend to discipline. But he was confident that the force which might be raised under these bills might, although they should not have the advantages of a disciplined body; and though unacquainted with actual service, be eventually found as serviceable from their having a rallying point, as those who had in action. He had frequently found this to be the case both in Flanders and the West Indies; and he considered it as a matter of great importance that they should be acquainted with the Officers who were to command them. He added, that he gave his hearty assent to the present measure.

Mr. BIDDULPH said, he was happy that the measure came before the House in its present shape, because it proved that the difficulties which many gentlemen, as well as himself, had stated would attend it, were now felt by the authors of the bill, and which difficulties were now about to be attempted to be removed. The defects of the former bill had been pointed out by an honourable Member of that House, of whose judgment there were not two opinions: as little variety of opinion did he believe existed as to the integrity of his principles; that gentleman had pointed out the defects of the late bill. However, no inquiry was made into the defects which were then pointed out; and now the Minister came forward with a motion for leave to explain and amend that very bill, thereby acknowledging its defects. His ideas of the bill were, that it could never be amended so as to become an useful measure to this country, and therefore he should beg leave to move an amendment to the motion of the Minister, which was, that instead of "explaining and amending the bill," it should be "repealed." He should do this, because he thought the execution of the bill would be impracticable. The only good circumstance about this bill was, in his opinion, its impracticability; for, could it be carried into effect, its provisions would be intolerable; it was, as he had always thought it to be, a measure of requisition. This, he said, when he had the honour to propose an amendment, which, however, the wisdom of the House thought proper to negative. The Minister now said, that this bill is a measure which will affect only those who have given some proof of their wealth. He believed it would be a bill that would bear heavily on many persons; that it would call on persons of all ages, and on women and children, to comply with its provisions, and therefore, from the very nature of it, would call on a great number of persons to pay for substitutes:

now the sum of money which would be thus required, would be very large. It must be observed, that there were many who would be called upon to contribute to the provisions of this bill, who had not a horse of sufficient size under this bill; for none could be taken that were not fourteen hands and half: therefore thirty-five pounds for such horse was a very moderate price; and computing the matter thus, the 20,000 would amount to 700,000l; but taking it only that 12,000 of these should be thus paid for, which appeared to him to be a moderate calculation, in that event the tax upon such persons would amount to 420,000l. This would have been the case under the last bill; and, unless materially amended, would be the case under the new one. These observations, he knew did not apply to persons possessed of affluent fortunes; but the bill affected those who were far from being in such a condition, and on whom it would be an intolerable burden. It was much more severe than any of the other burdens that were yet imposed, great and heavy as they were. In short, the objections he saw to this measure were such as to justify him in the opposition he gave to it; and therefore he moved an amendment to the Minister's motion, which was, that of leaving out the words "explain and amend," and inserting the word "repeal."

The question being put, the House divided; for the amendment 27, against it 168.

Wednesday, 14th December.

Mr. Alderman COMBE stated, that he was informed from respectable authority, that the new duties on customs and excise were exacted in consequence of the resolution of the House of Commons; and he wished to know, whether this proceeding was authorized from the Treasury before the passing of the bill?

Mr. ROSE said, that no order sent from the Treasury had been issued authorizing the Custom-house officers to exact the new duties; that they were merely authorized to give a notice to the merchants, and that it would be for the consideration of the House whether the duty ought to attach from the day of the passing of the resolution, or of the passing of the bill.

Mr. LONG brought up some papers from the Treasury, containing the correspondence which passed between Mr. Long and Mr. Boyd about the money advanced to the Emperor, together with an account of the interest by His Imperial Majesty upon the loan of four millions and an half.

Mr. FOX. Notwithstanding the importance of the subject of

“ Notwithstanding every precaution which can be taken to confine the expences of the different services within those sums, which, after consideration of the estimate laid before them, appear to the House of Commons to be fully sufficient, we learn from fatal experience, that this has been found to be impossible. In all the different services, the navy, the army, and the ordnance, there has always been an exceeding, or debt contracted upon each, which has been brought before Parliament in a subsequent session, under the title of navy debt, or of Extraordinaries incurred and not provided for. Formerly these exceedings were confined within some limits, as appears from the accounts entered in the journals during the war of the succession, and even in the war which terminated in 1748. In what is commonly called the German war, in 1758, these sums first became very large: but in the late war carried on in America, they exceeded all bounds. There was a degree of negligence, or extravagance, or both, in those who had the conduct of this department, which rendered all the votes of the House of Commons, or bills for appropriating the supplies, ridiculous and nugatory. The sums demanded upon the head of extraordinaries of the army, incurred, and not provided for during this period, fall not very much short of the whole sums voted by Parliament, upon estimate, for that service.”

Sir, Mr. Hatsell afterwards proceeds to speak of the transactions of the year 1734.

“ The general and unlimited power which was given by the Resolution of the 3d of April, 1734, to the Ministers to apply, out of the aids of the year, such sums as the exigency of public affairs might require, was a measure entirely subversive of those rules and restrictive forms of Parliament, which the House of Commons have imposed upon themselves in the mode of granting supplies, and was contrary to the practice, which had been wisely established since the Revolution, of appropriating the supplies to the services for which they had been voted. We see, therefore, that this proceeding did not pass without much difficulty and debate, and that soon after, another, and so far as it is limited, a better mode was adopted, which, though it gave the Ministers credit for the manner of disposing of the money voted, confined that credit to a precise and special sum. This deviation, in times of war, from the usual form of Parliament, can only be justified from the impossibility of stating, in an estimate, those demands which the unforeseen exigencies of extensive and uncertain operations may require; it is therefore incumbent on the House of Commons, not only to make this supply of credit as small as possible, but in a subsequent session to inquire into the particular expenditure of the sum granted, and to be assured that it is strictly applied to those purposes for which it was intended, and not squandered loosely, improvidently, wantonly, or, perhaps, corruptly.”

I am happy to observe also, that since this passage was quoted last year in another House (by the Marquis of Landsdown), the book has undergone a new edition, and that the author, in reviewing and republishing his valuable work, has seen no reason to alter his opinion upon the constitutional danger of granting large votes of credit, and of voting great sums under the head of extraordinaries,

which might have been previously provided for by Parliament. Having laid down this principle, then, and admitted the exception, I hope I shall not be accused of pursuing an argument which would operate as an objection to all extraordinaries. All I contend is this; that they are an evil, but an evil which may sometimes be unavoidable, or in other words, that they are a mischievous exception to the principles of the Constitution.

The measure now before the House involves two questions: in the first place, Whether it was an expence fit to be incurred? and, secondly, Ought it to have been incurred in the mode in which it actually has been incurred, or to have been previously submitted to the decision of Parliament? On the first question I shall not enter into any discussion. And, after I have guarded the House against considering it as my opinion, I shall suppose on this day, that it was an expence proper to be incurred. With this *caveat*, then, let it be taken for granted, for the sake of argument, that it was a wise and prudent measure to remit 1,200,000*l.* to the Emperor; yet we have still this important question to decide—Ought the sum to have been issued in the manner in which it was? And, in the first place, it was not an expence respecting the extent of which we could have been uncertain. Had the remittance been numerous, and the services for which they were destined been of a very complicated nature, it might have been difficult to ascertain with precision the amount of the sum to be granted, but there could be no difficulty in determining the sum which it was proper for this country to grant either to the Emperor or the Prince of Condé. I would beg to be informed why after the country had been in the practice, year after year, of maintaining emigrant corps, when it was in meditation to send supplies to the army of the Prince of Condé, the intention was not communicated to Parliament; or why a precise estimate, which might have been very easily formed of that head of expence, was not submitted to the House along with the other estimates for the year? In the present case, to rank the expence in the class of extraordinaries, was in good truth to go the length of rendering extraordinaries absurd and ridiculous, and all the laws of appropriation nugatory and void. To apply the vote of credit to defraying this expence, was as strange and unconstitutional. When gentlemen are informed that so early as December, 1795, two hundred thousand pounds were issued to supply the army of the Prince of Condé, upon what vote of credit will they naturally suppose the money to have been raised? It must be considered as an unforeseen expence, else it ought not to have been placed to the account of the vote of credit. From what vote of credit, then, is it natural

to suppose that an unforeseen expence occurring in December, 1795, should be defrayed? One would certainly suppose from the vote of credit for 1795. No such thing. It was defrayed from the vote of credit for 1796. What then was the conduct of the right honourable gentleman? In February, 1796, he came down to the House, and said, after all the taxes which I have levied, and all the burdens which I have imposed upon the country, and grievously the people will, no doubt, feel them; they are not sufficient to answer all the exigencies of the state, and I must have credit for two millions and a half more to meet the occurrences of unforeseen services, not, you will observe, to supply the deficiencies of former estimates, but to be applied expressly for the purpose of answering unexpected, but possible demands. But what does the right honourable gentleman do? The first use he makes of the vote of credit is to pay a remittance of 200,000*l.* to the Prince of Condé's army in December 1796, and of which Parliament knew nothing. By way of illustration, I shall suppose that a gentleman was leaving his House in town to go to the country, or his house in the country to come to town; and that he called his steward, and gave him a sum of money for the purpose of paying the servants their wages when they became due, and of paying the taxes when they were called for. The steward, we shall suppose, might say, Sir, all this is very proper, but on an establishment so extensive as yours, many expences in repairs, charities, &c. may occur for which I am not provided. Well, in consequence of this representation the gentleman gives him 200*l.* or 300*l.* more. But what would he think of his steward, if, instead of keeping this 200*l.* or 300*l.* in reserve for unforeseen exigencies, he applied the sum to the payment of debts which he had formerly contracted, and of which he kept his master ignorant. Not to use any coarser language, he would certainly consider him as a steward who was no longer worthy to be trusted. The analogy holds good in the conduct of the right honourable gentleman in applying the vote of credit for defraying expences formerly incurred, and which he kept secret from Parliament. This is something, but it is not all. There were some suspicious circumstances, in the time and manner in which the vote of credit was applied for. My honourable friend (Mr. Grey), who apprehended something incorrect, I remember well, was accused of being extremely suspicious, though his suspicions were certainly very far from coming near to the reality, if they could be called suspicions, which formerly, in Parliamentary language, would have been termed a watchful jealousy of the conduct of Administration. It was matter of surprise to

my honourable friend, as well as to myself, that application should be made for a vote of credit at so early a period of the year ; and admitting that it could be applied retrospectively, it was certainly not too much to expect that in the disposition paper which was produced in April, some account should have been given of the application of a sum which had actually been employed to cover an expence incurred in the preceding year. No such account, however, was given in that paper. Now, Sir, I ask, what was this but a direct fraud upon the public ? Supposing, for argument's sake, that there was a difference between the money sent to the army of the Prince of Condé and the sums sent to the Emperor, (though there certainly was no material difference, for it signified little whether we supplied an army which the House of Austria must otherwise have paid and supported, or whether we sent money to the House of Austria to enable it to pay and support that army). I wish gentlemen to attend a little to the debates of last Session of Parliament, and to the subjects of public discussion. They will recollect that there were several circumstances connected with the loan which attracted attention. There is one circumstance which it is material to recollect ; the terms upon which it was raised gave occasion to a good deal of discussion, and they were justified upon several grounds, one of which was, that we were not to consider it merely as a loan ; that a quantity of navy debt was to be funded, and that there might be wanted a loan of three millions for the Emperor. From this I certainly inferred, that if a loan was to be given to his Imperial Majesty, that the House of Commons would be consulted, both respecting its propriety and extent ; that Ministers never would have taken it upon them to grant pecuniary succours to any foreign power, without the consent of Parliament ; that those who were averse to the measure would have an opportunity of publicly opposing it ; and if it was carried, that at least it would not be adopted till it had assumed a legal and constitutional shape. I heard it also rumoured, upon what I considered to be very good authority at the time, that there were some people connected with the Bank who had stated the danger of sending so much specie out of the kingdom ; and that there were many gentlemen who were acquainted with the financial state of the country who would have opposed such a step, not upon political grounds, but upon their knowledge of the state of public credit. In the course of the session questions were put to the right honourable gentleman several times upon the subject. The answers were not very decisive, but they led me to conclude, that if the measure was in contemplation, the House of Commons would certainly be consulted

upon it, before it was finally adopted. Parliament was not consulted, and the period arrives when we find that money actually was sent to Germany. And here, for the sake of argument, I shall also admit that it was expedient, that it was wise, that it was necessary to send money to the Emperor, that it was necessary for the salvation of Germany, and that the salvation of Germany was necessary to that of Great Britain. This necessity then arose during the recess, and if they considered it as so imperiously urgent as not to admit of the delay of calling Parliament before the money was sent, why did they not assemble Parliament to inform the public of what had been done, and to petition for a bill of indemnity? Perhaps they will say, that that might be done as well at the usual period of the meeting of Parliament; that after the money was granted, it was unnecessary to assemble them for the purpose of informing them of a measure already adopted; that when they sent the first remittance they had no idea of sending a second; and that when the second was sent they did not conceive that a third would be necessary; and so on. Well: the 27 of November arrived, when the King had summoned Parliament to meet. One would have thought that, now their own time was come, they would have condescended so far as to communicate the secret. But no such communication is made. Now, Sir, I ask how Ministers, when Parliament was sitting, could presume, clandestinely, to send money to the Emperor without either informing or consulting the House of Commons upon the subject? I ask, if there be any possibility of answering the question to the satisfaction of the House of Commons of Great Britain, if they are not resolved tamely and pusillanimously to surrender the most sacred and important privilege that has been conferred upon them by the Constitution? I trust that I shall not hear the argument which was employed in a former debate related on this evening; that secrecy was observed for the purpose of restoring the credit of the country. This is too flimsy an argument to impose upon even the most superficial thinker; to what motive, then, is the conduct of Ministers to be ascribed? I can account for it upon only one of two grounds. The first and most natural, I confess, appears to be, that it was their intention to take advantage of the universal satisfaction which was occasioned throughout the country by the successes of the Imperial arms, to establish a precedent against the Constitution, by disposing of a sum of money in an unconstitutional mode upon a favourite object, and thus to set an example to future Ministers to employ the public money as their judgements may direct, or their caprices dictate, without consulting the wisdom or acknowledging the authority of Parliament.

The only other ground on which they can attempt to justify their conduct is, that the Ministers of the King are better judges than the House of Commons of the propriety, the extent, and the period for executing any public measure ! The right honourable gentleman knew for certain whether it was proper or improper to grant pecuniary succours to the Emperor ; he knew the specific sum which it was proper to send, and the precise period for remitting it ; but, had the House of Commons been consulted, they would not have been proper judges ; they would have been for sending either too much or too little ; for sending either too hastily or too tardily. Such a defence, Sir, for I may say so without incurring the imputation of meaning to detract from the abilities of the right honourable gentleman, instead of extenuating, is an aggravation of the offence. I ask, If a British House of Commons will bear to be told by a Minister, not only that he is a better judge than they are of the prerogatives of the Crown, which he did with so much arrogance in 1784, but that he is the best judge also of the people ? If the case was difficult, why did he not come to the House of Commons for instruction ? If the case was delicate, why did he not depend upon the wisdom of the House of Commons for direction ? If Germany was to be saved by the money of the people of Great Britain, why were not the House of Commons the saviours ? I ask him, whether he believes that the House of Commons would have sanctioned a loan to the Emperor, or that they would not ? If he thought that they would, why did he not apply to them ? If he conceived that they would not, why did he dare, not only to usurp their authority, but to trample upon their privileges ; to dispose of the money of the nation, not only without the consent, but in direct contradiction to the will of Parliament ? It is pretty well known that I have no great opinion of the public spirit of the last Parliament ; and I do believe, that after what they did to extend the influence of the crown, and to infringe upon the liberties of the people ; after their persevering support of a war, as disastrous in its consequences as it was unjust in its origin ; after their blind and obstinate confidence in Ministers, by whom they were deceived and misled, and after the grievous and intolerable burdens which they imposed upon the people ; I do believe, I say, that the influence of the Crown would have carried even this question. I am persuaded, however, it would have been attended with more than ordinary difficulty, and that Parliament would at least have hesitated before they gave their assent. But will the right honourable gentleman pretend to say, that he was not aware during last Parliament, that there would be any

necessity for the measure? I will ask him, when he considers the debt as having been contracted, whether, when the bills were drawn, or when the money was issued? If he considers the debt as contracted when the money was issued, the Emperor might have received it all, excepting about 77,000*l.* as soon, had Parliament been consulted, as he did when the money was sent without their concurrence. But, upon the other supposition, which is the more favourable of the two for the right honourable gentleman, that the debt was contracted when the bills were drawn, and that it was necessary that the bills should be drawn during the recess. Well, says the right honourable gentleman, was I to take the sense of Parliament upon the payment of a bill after permitting it to be drawn? I answer, that he must still take the sense of Parliament, when the question comes to be put upon the payment of the extraordinaries of the army; and that it is then in the power of the House of Commons, if not to stop the payment of that specific sum to the Emperor of Germany, to refuse to cover the deficiency which it has occasioned in the estimated service. One of the bills I find to have been dated on the 20th of May, and, if I recollect right, the House was prorogued on the 19th. Now I ask, Did he not foresee, did he not know, on the 19th, that this bill was to be drawn on the 20th? And if he did, which it was impossible but he must have done, I ask, when it was his intention to send money to the Emperor, why he concealed it? When he found that it would be necessary to call upon the country for pecuniary aid to the House of Austria, why he did not inform the public of the additional burden which they would be called upon to sustain? When he was compelled to have recourse to the House of Commons for support, why he did not ask that support in a constitutional manner? Supposing even for a moment, that the urgency of the crisis was such as to render it necessary to draw the bills during the recess, and that Parliament could not refuse to pay them, which is not true (for that was certainly in the power of Parliament), why did he not submit the matter to the House of Commons as soon as they were assembled? It could only have lessened the quantum of the money sent to the Emperor, which would have been no harm, had they thought it proper so to decide, except he was influenced by one or other of the motives before stated, either from a wish to establish a precedent against the Constitution, or from an idea that he was a better judge of the extent of the succours that were proper for this country to grant than the House of Commons. Without entering at all into the question of the propriety of granting these succours, a discussion

which I wish on this evening entirely to avoid, I cannot help making an observation upon the relation in which we stand to the House of Austria in pecuniary matters.

In 1795 this country guaranteed a loan to the Emperor of four millions and a half. There were many who doubted at the time of the policy of the measure; and I recollect well of a noble Lord urging in behalf of the good faith of his Imperial Majesty, that he had made good his first payment of the interest due upon the loan. I did not consider it as a very powerful argument at the time, because I know that the money for the first payment of the interest was deducted from the capital; and I shall be still less surprized now to hear of his Imperial Majesty's punctuality in paying the interest upon that loan after we have remitted him 1,200,000*l.* which is three or four times more than any sum of interest which he has to pay to this country. I do not state this as a reason why Parliament should withhold succours from the Emperor, but I state it as an additional reason why Ministers should be cautious of granting these succours without the sanction of Parliament. I have been often accused, Sir, of representing the Constitution as in danger. Of these alarms I am willing to take all the shame, and to the crime, if it be any, I readily plead guilty. The oftener that I have thought upon the subject, and the more experience I have of the conduct of Ministers, the more I am convinced that my alarms are just, and that my apprehensions are well founded. Upon some measures which I have conceived to be dangerous to the Constitution, I allow that there was room for difference of opinion. The question now before the House, however, is not whether the attack was greater or less than those which have been formerly directed against the Constitution. It is so bold and so daring, and so entirely subversive of the letter of the Constitution, that if it meets the sanction of Parliament, the question will be, not how far the Constitution is injured, but whether or not we have any Constitution at all? It is upon these grounds that I am induced to bring forward the opinion which I am about to propose. When it has been thought necessary to add new and extraordinary powers to the Crown; to accumulate new descriptions of treason; to inflict cruel, barbarous, and unheard-of punishments; in fact, to institute something approaching to a military government, whether these innovations have been necessary or not, I think they are of such a magnitude as to have justified some degree of alarm. But if, in addition to all these new and extraordinary circumstances, there is to be added a direct attack upon the privilege of this House, and 1,200,000*l.* is to be disposed of by the Minister, not only in aug-

mentation or expences approved of by Parliament, but without obtaining the consent, or so much as acknowledging Parliament, I should be glad to know where there is the smallest safeguard of the Constitution left, or what security we can have against the future encroachments, either of a Minister, or of a Prince, who may be disposed to make them? I am sure the right honourable gentleman cannot twist any provision in the vote of credit bill, so as to afford him the smallest pretence for making the application of one which he has done, and the expence can with less propriety be introduced among the extraordinaries of the army, since it might have been previously voted upon estimate. In both cases, whether the money has been paid from the vote of credit, or under the head of army extraordinaries, the right honourable gentleman has been equally culpable; in the one case, he has been guilty of a breach of trust; and in both, he has acted directly contrary to the principles of the Constitution. I move, Sir, that the act founded on the vote of credit may be read. [The act being read, Mr. Fox continued.] Some persons think, that in order to repair the breach of the Constitution, a bill of indemnity ought to be passed: for my own part, I am not of such an opinion; I think there is no alleviating circumstance in any part of the conduct of Ministers, to entitle them to such indulgence. When the subject was under discussion on a former evening, the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) instead of soliciting pardon, came forward vindicating his conduct, and challenging the House if they dared to find fault with it. I think, therefore, that an act of indemnity would be improper, because the circumstances have been even a greater outrage upon the Constitution (if a greater was possible) than the principle itself. I cannot conceive any proper mode of acting, if it is not for the House to express a plain intelligible opinion upon the measure. I know not what is their opinion, nor do I know the opinion of the public upon it; but this I do know, that he must be sanguine indeed who can hope that the Constitution can long survive such an attack, if the authors of it are suffered to pass without any mark of reprehension. Mr. Fox concluded with the following motion:

“ That His Majesty’s Ministers having authorized and directed,
“ at different times, without the consent, and during the sitting of
“ Parliament, the issue of various sums of money for the service of
“ his Imperial Majesty, and also for the service of the army under
“ the Prince of Condé, have acted contrary to their duty, and to
“ the trust reposed in them, and have thereby violated the constitu-
“ tional privileges of this House.”

Mr. Alderman COMBE, in obedience to the instructions of

his constituents, who had met that day in the Common Hall of the city of London, and had desired their representatives to censure the conduct of Ministers, in giving away the public money without the consent of Parliament, seconded the motion. He spoke of the respectability of the meeting, and of the pride he should always feel in obliging the voice of his constituents, the Livery of London, who almost unanimously disapproved of the Minister's conduct on the present occasion. And it was with peculiar satisfaction he now obeyed their voice, as his own sentiments entirely agreed with their opinion. After what had been advanced by his right honourable friend, he would not say a word upon the subject in a constitutional point of view. As the representative of the first commercial city in the world, he was well acquainted with the mischief produced by the money sent to the Emperor. The discounting of the bills drawn for the purpose of remitting money to the Imperial troops, had swallowed up so much of the money of the Bank, as to compel that great body to narrow their discounts, and the British merchants were made to suffer, that the German troops might be supplied. The remittances of the allied armies on the Continent had, in fact, been a great cause of the alarming scarcity of money last year, and of most of the embarrassments which had been experienced in the commercial world. He next adverted to the professions which had been so recently made by Members of Parliament, of love and respect for the Constitution, and of regard and deference for the sentiments of their constituents, which he hoped had not already evaporated, a proof of which he hoped that gentlemen would give on the present evening. He professed to be attached personally to no man, nor to have any prejudice against any of the Members of Administration. He voted with Mr. Fox, as a friend to human happiness, which was best secured by political liberty; and this evening he came down, to use the phrase of the right honourable gentleman, impregnated with the sense of his constituents, which was this day so fairly and decidedly given by the Common Hall.

Mr. Chancellor PITT. Upon a question so momentous and important to me as is the present, a question relative to the propriety of a transaction, in which I have had, perhaps, the largest share, I have, in the first instance, to request from the candour and justice of the House, that they will suspend their decision on the merits of the case, till they hear the whole of the circumstances with which it is connected, and that they will not allow themselves to form a judgement from any partial discussion or imperfect representation which may have hitherto taken place. I have to request that, dismissing every previous prepossession, they may now be prepared to

investigate the true nature and colour of the transaction as it shall appear from a view of all the particular details, with some of which it is probable they may not be acquainted, unless they have individually paid attention to ascertain what are the principles of the Constitution on this point, and what are the established precedents and usage of Parliament. The question is of a nature which can only be decided by referring to the true principles and practice of the Constitution. Whatever may be the private opinion of any Member, or whatever instructions he may have received from his constituents, those alone can form the proper grounds of decision. In the present instance, a full statement of all the facts, and an examination of former precedents, as they apply to the principle of the transaction, remain as yet to be brought forward; and without these, it is difficult to conceive how any gentleman can have formed a fair ground of decision. There is, perhaps, not any question on which a Member ought to allow the decided dictates of his own conscience and judgement to be superseded by the instructions of his constituents; but if there is any case in which a Member ought to be particularly anxious to preserve his right of private judgement, it is in the present instance, with respect to a criminal charge, where he has not heard the defence, and where it is impossible it could have been heard by those constituents from whom he may have received his instructions. In replying to the right honourable gentleman on the present occasion, it is no longer necessary for me to contend against the admission of a principle which, on a former evening, he urged to its utmost extent. If we compare the rigour with which the principle was then asserted with the tone which is now adopted, undoubtedly much time and waste of argument are now saved by the concession; nor is it my wish, by any unnecessary contention, to goad him into the assertion of his former opinion. I have only to congratulate myself, that the result of his deliberation has been more favourable with respect to the conduct of Administration in the present instance, and I trust more conformable to the principles and practice of the Constitution. The right honourable gentleman formerly asserted, that there was one thing which admitted of no exception in any instance—the right of that House in voting money for the public service. In reviewing, however, the practice of the Constitution, he has found that it has been customary in the most approved times to have recourse to extraordinaries, and that this proceeding has afterwards been uniformly approved by Parliament. The maxim which he before laid down, with respect to the right of the House in disposing of the public money, was then stated without any qualification. That all grants of money

for the public service must proceed from Parliament, is an undeniable proposition ; but in point of fact, it would be impossible to prosecute a war, to encounter any emergency, or to provide suitably for the public service, unless extraordinaries were allowed. On this point I desire to quote the history of the whole succession of administrations, from the reign of King William to the present period. It will be found, that in proportion to the difficulty of the crisis, and the dangers with which the country was threatened from the ambition of France, it has been found necessary to increase the rate of extraordinaries. I rest, then, the justification of the practice not on one or two solitary precedents, but on the uniform practice of the government of the country. The power of the House of Commons over the public purse is not cramped by any rigid, arbitrary, and unvarying rules : it is a power which is guided by a sound discretion, and which admits in its exercise all these modifications which are consistent with a prudent and well-regulated use of the public money. On this point, then, I have to desire you not to look to the recorded book of the Constitution, but to the unwritten law of Parliament, to the spirit and letter of the Constitution, and to the tenor and context of the whole history of the country. I state this in order to shew how the best principles of the Constitution, if taken without the due modifications which have been introduced by the wisdom of time, and sanctioned by the practice of the most enlightened and virtuous Administrations, may be carried to such an excess as to condemn every deviation which may be found indispensable for the ordinary purposes of Government, and which in particular situations may not only be necessary but laudable. I cannot but remark, that when the right honourable gentleman came to state his reasons for not extending the extraordinaries too far, he enlarged on the topic with so much more distinctness and force than he had discovered on any former part of the subject, that his objections seemed almost to do away the effect of the admission which he had made in the former instance with respect to the necessity of extraordinaries. He remarked, that every instance of extraordinaries placed the House in the dilemma, either of sanctioning such application of the public money, or of adopting a conduct which might be attended with injustice to individuals, or be ultimately prejudicial to the public credit. Whatever might be the effect of the extraordinaries, which were this night the subject of discussion, they certainly were not on that score more liable to objection than other species of extraordinaries. Liable to such reflection undoubtedly they were ; but it was matter of question how far, in such an instance, the risk

of imputation ought not to be over-ruled by the more imperious consideration of the public safety ?

There is another topic, to which it is necessary to attend. Since the middle of the present century, Parliament have been in the habit of giving votes of credit, in order to meet any pressing emergency or unforeseen expence, leaving the Government responsible for the particular application of the sum so voted. I will not deny that an undue extension of the extraordinaries, or a too frequent recurrence to votes of credit, ought as much as possible to be avoided, and it has been my practice, in addition to votes of credit, to bring forward, along with the services of the year, an estimate of the expences which I thought likely to be incurred ; but I contend that unless the purport for which any sum coming under this description is applied by Administration, be itself unlawful, there can be no illegality attached to the transaction. The nature of a vote of credit I consider to be such as gives a power to Administration to apply the sum to any exigence that may occur, however new in its circumstances, or however little it might be in the contemplation of the House at the time when that sum was voted. There is therefore no purpose of public utility, there is no case of pressing emergency which can possibly occur, which does not come strictly within the letter and spirit of a vote of credit, subject, however to those conditions and principles which I shall now state. Because I assert that there is no question of the illegality of the transaction, do I therefore affirm that there is no responsibility on the part of Ministers, that there is no constitutional duty which they owe to the country, that there is no deference to be paid to the wisdom of Parliament ? I am too well acquainted with the nature of the situation in which I stand, and too sensible of the obligations which I owe to the public, ever to have adopted such language, or to have entertained such feeling. I am well aware that every distribution of public money adopted by Ministers is a matter of legal discussion, subject to the revision and the controul of Parliament, and that their vigilance in respecting such distribution becomes even more necessary in proportion to the extent of the sum, and the emergency of the crisis. I have only to request, that in discussing the propriety of the distribution, Parliament will not forget that emergency which rendered the measure necessary. But I do not mean to stop with merely vindicating the propriety and expediency of the measure ; I will admit that if at the time that the vote of credit was demanded, Ministers foresaw any source of important and permanent expence which was likely soon to occur, and which could admit to be precisely stated and publicly divulged without any danger to the in-

terest of the community, they ought not to delay in making the communication. Undoubtedly Ministers were subject to a strict responsibility in the distribution of public money, and were bound to act with a sound discretion. They were bound to consider how far they might safely communicate the object of expence, to appreciate the risk to be incurred, to consult for the best interest of the public, and to decide how far the advantage likely to be achieved was adequate to the sacrifice which must necessarily be made on the part of the country. If in the present instance Ministers have departed from those principles, if they have lost sight of any of those objects, which if it be the case, I can at least affirm, has not been so willingly, but from an error of judgement, they must still remain subject to the censure of the House. Whatever has been the utility and importance of the service achieved, and however irresistible the impression upon their own minds which dictated the measure they adopted, they are certainly entitled to censure, if they have in any respect deviated from the line of sound discretion. The right honourable gentleman has thought proper to reserve his opinion with respect to the measure; but declared that for the sake of argument, he would admit it to be useful. He asserted that whether useful or not, the force of his argument to expose the mischievous tendency of the principle would not at all be weakened. He admitted that extraordinaries were matter of indispensable necessity, and yet was at so much pains to point out the danger of the practice, as almost to do away the effect of his admission. I certainly consider every expence incurred without the authority of Parliament, as in some respect objectionable; if the supply required amounts to a large sum, if it is wanted for a peculiar service likely to be permanent, and which may bear safely to be divulged, it ought unquestionably in the first instance to be submitted to the sanction and approbation of Parliament. But if the necessity of the supply is increased by the difficulty of the circumstances under which it must be granted; if to divulge the object would be attended with danger; and either the least eligible mode of granting the money must be adopted, or the service itself relinquished; is it fair to put the utility and importance of the operations achieved under those circumstances altogether out of the question? With respect to the sums granted to the Emperor, one thing is evident, that the measure which has been adopted has succeeded, which, if attempted in any other way, might in all probability have failed of its object. I ask gentlemen, what are their own feelings in the present moment with respect to the situation of the country in the present contest? and what are their prospect to the accomplishment of peace

on terms consistent with the honour and interest of Great Britain? And I request them to look back to the months of July and August, when the French were pursuing their triumphant career with an impetuosity which seemed to defy all opposition, and to threaten the general subjugation of Europe. If they look to the circumstances of that period, how different must have been the prospects which they then entertained from those which we may now indulge, in the improved state of the affairs of our allies. Let them contemplate the slow, firm, measured and magnanimous retreat of the gallant Austrian army, and the consequences which followed from a retreat only calculated to ensure the success of their future operations. Will they then ask themselves, dry as the question may be, when so animated a subject is presented to the mind, how far the assurance of the aid which this country was disposed to grant, may have invigorated the spirit of a country making its utmost efforts to resist an invading foe, how, far it may have given confidence to their resources, and enabled them to prosecute that line of operations which has been attended with such distinguished success? With these considerations in his view, is there any man who can regard as a matter of consequence, whether the expence of 900,000*l.* or 1,200,000*l.* has been incurred to the country? Is there any man who can question the propriety of the sum allotted for the object, and would be willing, for the sake of so paltry a saving, to give up our share in promoting a service, which has terminated so honourably for the character of our allies, and so beneficially for the general interests of Europe? Who would not rejoice that he was admitted into partnership so illustrious, and accompanied with such brilliant success?

“ ————— Me credite Lesbon,
 “ Me Tenedon, Chrysenque, & Cyllan Apollinis urbes,
 “ Et Scyron cepisse. Meâ concussa putate
 “ Procubuisse solo Lyrnesia mœnia dextrâ.”

We have besides to consider, that whatever in this instance has been given, has only been lent to a power whom we have no reason to distrust. Even if a sum had been given to a much larger amount, it would surely have been amply repaid by the success which has attended the exertions of our allies, and the important advantages which have been gained to the common cause. In the course of discussion on this subject, frequent mention has been made of the opinion of the public. The public are not so dead or so insensible as either to be ignorant of the advantages which have been obtained, or ungrateful towards those to whose gallant exertions they are indebted on the present occasion. There is not a man, even the

meanest individual in the country, who will not feel himself more than repaid for the small quota which he will be required to bring forward in aid of the public service, by the important benefits which have been secured to the general interest of Europe. There is not, I will venture to say, an Englishman who does not feel the most ardent sympathy with the magnanimity, the resources, the spirit and perseverance which have been displayed by Austria in her recent exertions, and who does not rejoice that the contributions of England have been brought forward in aid of operations which have been equally marked by their gallantry and success. It never was in my contemplation, under the sanction of a vote of credit, to advance for a particular object all the sums voted for the service of the year. At the very period that the vote of credit was brought forward, a reserve was expressly made for a loan to the Emperor to a much greater amount than the whole of the vote of credit. What is the inference from this circumstance, but that His Majesty's Ministers were deeply impressed with the propriety of making large advances to Austria, to enable it to support the operations necessary for the common cause? With what other view could it be supposed that Government would propose a loan which could only tend to embarrass their other operations of finance? When the vote of credit was brought forward, they saw all the importance of the object, and thought proper to announce their intention to bring it forward in a distinct shape. From the peculiar circumstances of the time, the particular period at which it might be eligible to bring it forward appeared then to be doubtful. Some doubt arose from the negotiations which were then going on between His Majesty and his ally, the Emperor, with respect to terms. Much hesitation was also felt from the extraordinary drain of money which had already taken place, and which had occasioned in consequence a circulating medium. It was supposed that it would be some time before the influx of trade would be such as to supply the deficiency, and afford a suitable accommodation to those interested in the various details of that extensive commerce conducted in this country. It was, therefore, doubted how far a loan to the Emperor, under those circumstances, would in the first instance be practicable; and in the second instance, how far it would be prudent and safe. With respect to the credit of the country, I was sanguine enough to hope that it would be restored to its proper channel in sufficient time to allow me to bring forward a vote for a separate loan to the Emperor. Under that opinion I took steps to authorise some temporary advances to be made for the service of the Austrian troops; I was disappointed in my view of public credit being brought back to that

situation in which it would have been prudent to have proposed the measure of a separate loan to the Emperor. The campaign was on the point of opening, and could not wait either for a more definitive arrangement of terms, or for a more favourable turn in the prospects of this country. In order to give efficacy to any aid that might be granted, it was necessary it should be immediate. Parliament was drawing towards its conclusion, and it was impossible then to bring forward the discussion of a loan to the Emperor. All those who now argue against this measure, at that time contended that a public loan to the Emperor was impossible. Will they now tell me that a private remittance was impossible? The one has taken place, and has been found to be productive of the happiest effects. The other has not been tried, because Ministers adopted the conviction then avowed by those honourable gentlemen, that, under the particular circumstances of the case, the measure was impossible. In the mean time the situation of the country, in a pecuniary point of view, has undoubtedly become more favourable. I am now enabled to state the opinion of those who were in the first instance most adverse to a public loan, and who now feel that the present mode of granting aid to our ally, has not only reduced the inconvenience of such a measure, but has not in the smallest degree deprived the country of any advantage that could have been expected to flow from the increase of its trade and its general situation; it has not prevented that situation from having been greatly improved by the events which have since taken place. At the meeting of the present Parliament, those with whom I was in the habits of confidential intercourse, will be enabled to state to the House, that I looked with the utmost anxiety to the period when I should be enabled to make to the House the communication of every step that had taken place in the business. Yet in all this the right honourable gentleman sees nothing but a deliberate intention to violate the rights of Parliament. He can perceive no symptom of a wish to save Germany and Great Britain from the imminent dangers with which they were threatened. He thinks that we have only availed ourselves of the opportunity to conceal our attempt against the Constitution under the cover of the glory of the Austrian arms; but I must remind him that this resolution to support the arms of our allies was taken at no moment of brilliant success; that it was influenced by no delusive phantom of military glory; it was taken at a moment when the prospects of this country and our allies were the most discouraging. In adopting this resolution at such a moment Ministers gave a pledge of their sincere attachment to the country, and of their firm determination to support its best interests. They were not ignorant of the consequences of their conduct, of

the risk of those measures they adopted, and the responsibility which attached to themselves from the event. In that situation they were called upon to decide ; and both the testimony of their former opponents and of monied men might be brought to prove, that they had adopted that line of conduct which was most safe and prudent for the country. In point of reasoning it might appear, that there was no obvious difference between a loan in one way to a stated amount, and a regular vote in a Committee of Supply. But, in the last instance, what must have happened ? All the circumstances of the case must, in consequence, have come under the consideration, and a suitable provision have been made. To make up the sum to the extent of the exigency, it might have been necessary to make it up beyond the present ability of the country. If, on the other hand, it was determined to grant to the least amount of what appeared to be required by the occasion, what would this have been but to confess to Europe, and, above all, to confess to our enemy, the great difficulties under which you laboured, and to shew that by the embarrassments of your own situation you were compelled to stint the acknowledged wants of your ally ? Such a conduct, while it tended to dispirit and weaken your allies, must at the same time have given additional vigour to the operations of your enemies, and have induced them to persevere in a contest in which they might ultimately hope for success from the exhausted state of your resources. Strong as these considerations are, they are not the strongest which may be urged on the present occasion, in justification of the conduct of Ministers. You undoubtedly perform a faithful and valuable duty, when you grant to your ally an assistance at once proportioned to the extent of his emergency, and the necessity of your own situation. But how is this degree of assistance to be appreciated, or how is it to be granted so as to render it fully efficacious to your ally, with the least possible sacrifice to your own interest ? When you weigh your own necessity in one scale and his in another, you are not surely to watch the beam from mouth to mouth, till the scale is transferred to his hands. Had this measure been adopted in the shape and mode which has been suggested, the object would have been defeated. Are Government, then, to be reproached with having preferred their own judgement to that of Parliament ? They saw a mode of conveying that assistance with effect which, if attempted in another way, might have been doubtful in its operation, and they adopted it with success. The options on which they were called to determine, and which in the present instance, are submitted to the decision of the House, were these :
“ Ought you to yield to the pressure of temporary difficulty, and

“ abandon your ally at a moment when such a step may be deci-
“ sive of his fate? Ought you, on the other hand, completely to
“ pledge yourselves to grant a pecuniary assistance which, in the
“ first instance, may be attended with considerable inconvenience,
“ and the influence of which, on the future course of events, you
“ are unable to ascertain?” A decision having been adopted by
Ministers to make some temporary advances, the supplies that have
subsequently taken place have been granted on the same principle.
The utmost emphasis has been laid by the opponents of this measure
on the enumeration of the different sums advanced, according to the
date in which they appear in the account of extraordinaries. But
can there be a man so superficially acquainted with the nature of
such a transaction, as to suppose that this enumeration of dates has
any thing to do with respect to the extent of the assistance afforded
to Austria? Was it to be supposed that the conduct of Austria, not-
withstanding the storm that menaced destruction to Europe, in sub-
duing adversity and retrieving prosperity, was not such as ought to
demand an efficacious and continued support from this country?
Could it be supposed that the principle, when once adopted, would
not be acted upon, so far as it united two objects the most important
—the pecuniary security of England and the safety of the territories
of Austria? Our conduct, then, in granting these sums, is not to
be traced to October or November, it is to be traced back to the
period of difficulty and danger; nor is any inference to be drawn
from the circumstance of dates, that we preferred our own judgement
to that of Parliament. Our determination was formed at a time
when it was impossible that the sense of Parliament could be pro-
perly taken, or that the subject could be safely brought forward. It
has been said, that we ought to have asked the opinion of Parliament
with respect to each sum that was separately advanced. I leave to
the House to determine, whether in this way it would have been
possible to have formed a fair judgement, either with respect to the
assistance necessary to be granted, or the advantages to be derived
from our co-operation. But how have we acted? So long as the
measure was doubtful we kept the responsibility to ourselves. We
afforded a pledge of our attachment to the country, by incurring all
the risk of a measure which, though dictated by the sincerest regard
for its interest, was at the same time uncertain in its issue. We
waited for the proper period till we could state the measure in its
full extent to the House, the nature of the services to which it has
been applied, and the effects which it has produced. It will remain
for the House, judging of so material a part of national expenditure,
and still more essential in the view of national policy, to decide

with respect to our conduct. But I should do injustice to this subject, if I did not put the House in mind of the practice of our ancestors in former cases of a similar nature, and enable them to compare the conduct adopted on the present occasion with the established principles and practice of the Constitution.

I have heard it asserted, that applying the vote of credit for foreign troops is unprecedented; but, Sir, I can with safety state, that since the time of the Revolution to the present moment, not only extraordinaries, but votes of credit continually occur in a similar manner. Such was the case in the beginning of the reign of King William. I request the right honourable gentleman will take the trouble of turning to the Journals in 1701. He will find in that year, amongst the article of extraordinaries, the interest of the money borrowed by His Majesty for the pay of foreign troops. He will find that money was provided for, which had been granted during the recess of Parliament to foreign troops, and even to the Swedish succours which King William had borrowed. If the right honourable gentleman will be at the pains of prosecuting his search, he will find, in the reign of Queen Anne, extraordinaries of the same nature; and that at a period as highly favourable to constitutional principles as any other period in our history. He will find in the years 1704 and 1705, subsidies and extraordinary expences for foreign troops which had not been previously provided for by Parliament. In the year 1706 a precedent so very remarkable occurred, that I will desire it to be read in the course of the debate. There was laid before the House an account of three separate sums, a remittance to the Duke of Savoy, a loan to the Emperor of Germany, and a subsidy to the Landgrave of Hesse. There was also the striking feature in the transaction, that the subsidy to the Emperor was not granted from the pressure of any immediate necessity during a recess, but was sent before the end of a session, and not brought forward till the ensuing session; the journals afforded no light with respect to any debate which had taken place on the occasion; but it appeared that some discussion had arisen on the subject; for the grant of the different sums had not only been made good, but a specific resolution had passed the House, that the sums which had been incurred had been applied for the benefit of the Emperor, the preservation of the Duke of Savoy, and the interest and glory of Europe. Again, Sir, we meet with precedents of a nature equally cogent, recorded on the journals of the Commons in 1706, 1707, and 1712; and I dare say many other instances may be found, particularly the exceedings paid to the Duke of Savoy in the year 1718, during the reign of George the First.

A general vote was then passed, to enable His Majesty to make such augmentation of his forces, and to take such troops into his pay, and to empower him to pay for them accordingly, as the general exigency of public affairs might appear to him to require. If such, then, had been the nature of the vote of credit, at the period I allude to, and if it has continued ever since the same, I trust, Sir, it does not call for peculiar exertions to prove to the satisfaction of the House, that the measure now under consideration is strictly conformable to the practice followed by Government, and sanctioned by the resolutions of the House of Commons. With respect to the vote of credit which passed in 1718, and which enabled His Majesty to take such troops into his service and pay them, according to the general exigency of affairs, it follows, that His Majesty was authorized by that vote to employ and pay foreign troops, as well as the forces of the country. It was stated generally, and the term foreign was consequently comprehended in that statement. Again, in the year 1734, a general vote of credit passed this House, to enable the Government to apply sums of money to such measures as the exigencies of affairs might require. There is another precedent which bears a singular analogy to the present question, and the present time, if we consider the manner in which the subject is now brought forward. In 1742, a marked issue was made of a sum of money to the Commander of the Imperial army, for the express purpose of putting his forces in motion—this measure took place during the administration of Mr. Pelham, of whose integrity and attachment to the Constitution no doubt can be entertained, and under whose wise and prudent management this country enjoyed a state of prosperity unexampled in former periods. Upon that occasion, a measure similar to what has been proposed this night was brought forward in the House. It was moved that the advancing money upon such an occasion was a misapplication of the public treasure, and subversive of the principles of the Constitution. This motion was got rid of by the previous question; on the ground, that if the aid had been denied upon that occasion, it would have been injurious to the success of the Austrian troops. The vote of censure against the Minister was then amended by a resolution to leave out the censure, and to substitute, that these advances had been necessary to put the Austrian troops into motion, and that the measure was of great importance and benefit to the common cause. When we compare this precedent with the question now before the House, and see the close resemblance there is between the one and the other, I trust no gentleman will hesitate in being of opinion, that the ground of charge

now brought forward against me, is nothing more than what has been the approved practice of the British Government even in the best period of its history. Such as I have now stated was the conduct of our ancestors on occasions similar to the present, and such their view with respect to the policy which ought to be adopted by Administration. When they compare the period of 1742 with the crisis of 1796, it will remain for the House to determine what decision they ought to form in the present instance. I will now call to gentlemen's recollection, transactions that have happened nearer to our own times. Practices of this kind were adopted in the last war; and in the year 1787, amidst all the heat of contending parties, the advances made by Government for the preservation of Holland, were unanimously approved by the House. Perhaps I may not be permitted to state those proceedings which met the approbation of the last Parliament; for those gentlemen who are in the constant habit of opposing the measures of Government, and who have lately used as little ceremony towards the memory of that Parliament, as they have to the character of His Majesty's Ministers, will not admit of any thing as a precedent which might have been adopted by them. It will, however, be judged by posterity, how far that Parliament did violate the rights of the People, or the liberties of the Constitution. The vigilant minority which framed a part of that Parliament, suffered extraordinary measures to be voted without any opposition. The treaties of subsidy to the King of Sardinia and the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, as they were concluded just before the end of a session, and not made good till the ensuing session, stood in precisely the same predicament with the sums granted to the Emperor. I must now put the right honourable gentleman in mind of a transaction which is not far removed from the present day. In the year 1795, a loan of 4,500,000*l.* was guaranteed to the Emperor by this House. It will not be forgotten, that the first intimation of that loan was notified to this House in February, 1795; in consideration of which, his Imperial Majesty was to keep an army of 200,000 men in actual service. In His Majesty's message to this House on that subject, it was stated that there were to be included in that loan such certain advances made in the Autumn before to the Austrian army, the particular amount of which was not stated; and the House returned an answer, that the loan was advisable; but the loan was not made till May. In one interval, nothing was said of advances, only the right honourable gentleman made a motion for a statement of the particular sums, the account of which was now on the table. This shewed that the attention of the House was

drawn by Mr. Fox to the transaction, which was exactly of the same kind as the present: 250,000*l.* were advanced in February, and 300,000*l.* in May, and were made good of this loan. Though the policy of making the loan was debated, and contested violently, and nothing omitted that could embarrass Government, not a word was said of the advances before the loan, though the right honourable gentleman could not then be so ignorant of the principle of the Constitution, which he now enforced, as to preclude deliberation upon it. In the repeated discussion, which then took place on the subject, in no instance was the measure attacked on the score of its unconstitutional tendency. All the objections were urged to the propriety and expediency of the measure, and so far the principle seemed to have their acquiescence and testimony in its favour. If such be the case, said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I ask, on what principles of justice a criminal charge can now be brought against me, for merely having followed the uniform tenor of precedent, and the established line of practice? By what interpretation of a candid and liberal mind can I be judged guilty of an attempt wantonly to violate the Constitution? I appeal to the right honourable gentleman himself, who is not the last to contend for the delicacy which ought to be used in imputing criminal motives to any individual, and to urge in the strongest terms, the attention which ought to be shewn to the candid and impartial administration of justice. In what country do we live? and by what principles are we to be tried? by the maxims of natural justice and constitutional law, or by what new code of some revolutionary tribunal? Not longer than a year and a half since the same principle was adopted, and suffered to pass without any animadversion; and now, at a crisis of ten-fold importance, and where the measure has not out-run the exercise of a sound discretion, it is made the foundation of a criminal charge. We are accused with a direct and wanton attack upon the Constitution. It is not supposed that we have been actuated by any but the blackest and most malignant motives. We are not allowed the credit of having felt any zeal for the interest of our country, nor of those advantages which the measure has produced to the common cause. There is another part of this measure, on which I think it necessary to make an observation or two: The army of the Prince of Condé, which has been alluded to, has been understood as acting in concert with the Emperor for the defence of Germany. It is said, that the sums advanced for the army ought to be the subject of an estimate beforehand. I believe, as far as I can recollect the transaction, that there never was any permanent engagement made on the part of

Great Britain for the maintenance of that corps, which had always been subject to variation as to the succours that have at different times been sent to them ; and this was done on the ground, that if the services of the corps should not be required, they were not to be used at all, or maintained by this country. I shall next say a few words on the subject of the payment of the dividends due upon the Austrian loan. It is obvious, that if the Emperor has applied to us for fresh succours, and we have given them, we by the same act render him better able to pay the interest of the loan. But if we were to send him sums for the prosecution of the war, and he again to send sums to this country for the payment of interest, there would, in that case, be a double remittance, and the difficulties must be thereby increased. It was more easy, therefore, to account for this interest by the money which was to be furnished ; and thus the general balance of the account was effected.

I have now weighed the whole merits of the transaction before the House, and with them I am well content to leave the decision. While we claim a fair construction of the principles and intentions which have guided our conduct, if it shall appear that it has in the smallest instance deviated from any constitutional principle, we must submit to the consequence, whatever be the censure or punishment. It is our duty, according to the best of our judgement, to consult for the interest of the country : it is your sacred and peculiar trust to preserve inviolate the principles of the Constitution. I throw myself upon your justice, prepared in every case to submit to your decision ; but with considerable confidence, that I shall experience your approbation. If I should be disappointed, I will not say that the disappointment will not be heavy, and the mortification severe ; but at any rate it will be to me matter of consolation, that I have not, from any apprehension of personal consequences, neglected to pursue that line of conduct, which I conceived to be essential to the interests of the country and of Europe. But while I bow with the most perfect submission to the determination of the House, I cannot but remark on the extraordinary language which has been used on this question. Ministers have been broadly accused with a wanton and a malignant desire to violate the Constitution ; it has been stated that no other motive could possibly have actuated their conduct. If a charge of such malignant intention had been brought against men, who have affirmed the present war to be neither just nor necessary, and who on that ground cannot be supposed friendly to its success, who have extolled, nay, even exulted in the prodigies of French valour ; who have exclaimed against the injustice of bringing to trial persons who had associated to overawe

the Legislature ; who were anxious to expose and aggravate every defect of the Constitution ; to reprobate every measure adopted for its preservation, and to obstruct every proceeding of the Executive Government to ensure the success of our contest in which we are engaged in common with our allies : I say, if such a charge of deliberate and deep-rooted malignity were brought against persons of this description, I should conceive that even then the rules of candid and charitable interpretation would induce us to hesitate in admitting its reality, much more when it is brought against individuals, whose conduct, I trust, has exhibited the reverse of the picture I have now drawn. I appeal to the justice of the House ; I rely on their candour ; but, to gentlemen who can suppose Ministers capable of those motives which have been imputed to them on this occasion, it must be evident that I can desire to make no such appeal.

Mr. BRAGGE went over the same ground of argument and precedents which had been adopted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He said, that with regard to the confidence which was placed in the Ministers of the Crown, and so much and so frequently declaimed against in that House, it was right to distinguish between it and that sort of individual confidence, to which some of the animadversions might, on many occasions, more justly apply. The confidence reposed in the executive servants of Government, was of a public and constitutional nature, to be exercised for the benefit of the Public, and for the use or abuse of which, they were responsible to that House. This confidence was far from being unknown in the general administration of Government ; for surely Ministers might with as good, if not much better reason, be trusted with the disposal of this vote of credit, subject afterwards to the revision and approbation of Parliament, than the secret-service money ; for no account whatever could be demanded of them. Parliament, in passing that vote, was sensible that the public service would be liable to exigencies which could not at that moment be foreseen, and the money was made generally applicable to any exigencies which might arise. The situation of our principal and truly faithful ally produced that exigency ; the state of public credit required, that the mode in which assistance was conveyed to him should not be generally canvassed or publicly known, and those combined circumstances brought on the necessity which fully justified the Minister in the measures he so successfully, and, in his mind, meritoriously adopted. This necessity, however, was stigmatized by the opponents of the Minister as the tyrant's plea ; whereas tyrants, in fact, seldom condescended to use any plea at all.

These, indeed, were only employed by the Ministers of a free people, entrusted with administering their affairs to the best advantage, and to the utmost of their abilities, subject to be called afterwards to account for their conduct, whatever it might be. So placed, and being necessarily invested with a considerable portion of discretion, it was their business to look more to the spirit than the letter of their powers; for many things would require, in the progress of events, to be acted upon more liberally than may, perhaps, be warranted by a rigorous construction of the letter of any public instruction to which discretion was annexed. He asked the gentlemen of Opposition, whether they would be content to have this money that had been sent to the Emperor restored to the Treasury, and would rather see the French marching up to Vienna? Upon the whole, his opinion was, that the conduct of the Minister, so far from meriting censure, was highly deserving of the gratitude of the nation; but at the same time he was desirous that the proceeding, dictated by necessity, should not be drawn into precedent in future, notwithstanding the auspicious consequences with which it was now attended. He would with this view propose a resolution to the House, the object of which would be to guard, on the one hand, the privileges of the House; and on the other, to pay a due respect to the services performed by Ministers, whom he could not help admiring for their magnanimity and services to their country. He would, therefore, move, as an amendment to the motion made by the right honourable gentleman, to leave out from the first word "That," and to insert, "the measure of advancing the several sums of money, which appear from the accounts presented to the House in this session of Parliament, to have been issued for the service of the Emperor, though not to be drawn into precedent, but upon occasions of special necessity, was, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, a justifiable and proper exercise of the discretion vested in His Majesty's Ministers by the vote of credit, and calculated to produce consequences, which have proved highly advantageous to the common cause, and to the general interests of Europe."

Mr. THORNTON said, an honourable gentleman had alluded to the conduct of the Bank. They, upon a view of the existing circumstances, stated, that a loan to the Emperor at that period would be attended with unpleasant circumstances. Large payments had been made to the army, and they thought it their duty to declare, that until the country had retrieved itself, they were unanimously of opinion that the loan to the Emperor could not be advanced. Upon this last loan of eighteen millions, he had the evi-

dence of Mr. Morgan in stating, there was no consideration for the Imperial loan. In regard to the statement of the honourable gentleman (Mr. Combe), respecting discounts, he could controvert what he had stated, for the last year the Bank discounted very largely ; with regard to the present question, he at first felt some difficulty, whether a bill of indemnity would not be proper, but he was now convinced that the measure did not stand in need of such justification.

Mr. Alderman COMBE explained.

Mr. Alderman LUSHINGTON declared, that he should not have risen, but particular circumstances called upon him for a few remarks. It was true that there had been a meeting of his constituents that day, as was stated by his colleague, and a large majority of that Common Hall had resolved to give their instructions to support a motion for censuring the Ministers. For his part he thought it necessary to observe, that not one sixth part of the Liverymen of London were present at that meeting ; and he believed it would appear from recent instances, that the authority of a Common Hall in the city would be soon superseded if an appeal should be made to the Livery at large. He did declare that day to his constituents, that he would not be directed by any authority in his vote ; but give his verdict when he should hear the whole of the cause, according to his own judgement ; for he could never consent to receive instructions to pronounce a verdict, in a criminal case, before he had heard the defence. It was said that the Constitution had been violated ; the papers on the table would prove the contrary. That money was advanced was admitted ; but revert to the vote of credit for a justification. Considering the terms upon which that sum of 2,500,000*l.* was granted to His Majesty for the exigency of the country, he was clearly of opinion that it had been so applied. Look at the connection between Great Britain and his Imperial Majesty : there was an unity of connection and interests so closely blended, that whatever affected the one, had an equal influence upon the other ; the one could not feel distress without the other suffering a share. He would refer to the House, and also to the country at large, what were their sensations at the rapid progress of the French arms, and what were their feelings at the effectual check which they had experienced from Austrian valour : when that circumstance was viewed, and the sum balanced against it ; the one, compared with the effect it produced, was trifling, and insignificant indeed. It was truly trifling when compared with the magnitude of the war : a war not of conquest, not begun for the acquisition of territory, or the hope of plunder, but carried on for

the independence of Britain, the security of our Constitution, and the protection of the property of every individual. He thought that none could for a moment hesitate to contribute a small part of his income to aid the exertions which were employed in such a case. Respecting the exportation of specie, he admitted that it had certain consequences, which for a time were disagreeable. The mass of property increased in a great proportion, and the circulating medium ought to increase in an equal ratio; but it did not increase in equal necessary proportion; withdrawing any part was a cause of temporary embarrassment. In times of difficulty he thought the hands of Government ought to be strengthened, and in this instance he was at first inclined to think a bill of indemnity would be proper, but he had since heard enough to convince him that it was not necessary.

Mr. Alderman CURTIS said, he had been that day at the Common Hall, where, upon a show of hands, a majority appeared in favour of the resolution to censure the Minister beforehand. Previous to the meeting he knew that such would be the result; nor did he consider it as a regular expression of the sentiments of the Livery of London. He told his constituents that he could not, under such circumstances, promise to abide by their instructions; but would attentively consider all that should be advanced on both sides, and act as his judgement should direct.

Mr. Alderman ANDERSON said, there were about one-tenth of the Livery of London assembled, and it was his fortune to differ from his constituents; when they were assembled, an honourable gentleman (Mr. William Smith), who usually sat under the gallery, made a flaming speech to them, and they immediately gave the instructions as stated by his colleague; he told them he would not vote as they required to censure Ministers till he heard their defence. With this he was fully satisfied, and therefore he supported the amendment.

Mr. J. NICHOLLS was aware he should please neither side of the House, for he considered the motion as proposing too much, and the amendment too little. He animadverted on the impropriety of sending money in the manner that had been done to the Imperial Court. He blamed the measure in discussion, from the inconvenience to which the country was exposed by too sudden a diminution of the circulating coin. He observed, that the current coin had of late very alarmingly diminished. During the last two years, there had been a defalcation of at least two millions. The loss upon the coinage was 5 per cent. and the gain on melting not less. By this means there accrued a double loss; and in these

circumstances His Majesty's Ministers should have been particularly careful not to export, unless from absolute necessity, a large sum out of the country. It was necessary that there should be a certain proportion between the coin and the paper in circulation. He should think himself criminal if he voted an unlimited power to Ministers to remit money to foreign powers; but he could not accede to the proposition of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) on that side of the House. He thought it improper to be urged during the pending negociation, as it might alienate the Emperor from the common cause, by making it appear that the British Parliament had censured the Minister for giving him aid. Though he could not agree to the original proposition, he thought the Constitution should be protected, by an express declaration on this point. No Minister should have power to send money out of the country, without the previous consent of Parliament. This important fact should be settled, but by what means he was not prepared to say. Perhaps a bill of indemnity sounded too harshly in Ministers' ears. A declaratory law, or any thing more palatable, might be passed. He wished Mr. Fox would withdraw his motion, and yet it was necessary that some proceeding should take place to prevent the establishment of bad precedents.

Colonel WOOD.—Mr. Speaker, at this late hour, however unwilling I may be, Sir, to trespass upon the indulgence of this House, yet when I reflect that the subject at present before us, not merely involves in its consideration the prosperity and safety of this kingdom, but the preservation of its liberties and constitution, I should not think that I had strictly done my duty as a Member of Parliament were I not briefly to submit to the House those reasons which induce me to vote for and support the amendment.

Were any Minister to be so far wanting in his duty to his country, so very forgetful of that respect which he owes to this House, as, without any previous sanction of Parliament, to dispose of the public money for the purpose of subsidising foreign states, I most perfectly agree in the principles laid down by the right honourable gentleman who has brought forward the present motion, that no censure in the power of this House to impose would be an adequate punishment for such a crime. The question which, therefore, will be for us to determine is, whether or not Parliament ever granted to His Majesty's Ministers any direct, or even implied powers, under which they can justify their conduct in giving a temporary aid to the Emperor; and if so, how far that power had been exercised for the honour and for the advantage of this country. It is certain that Parliament voted a credit of two

millions five hundred thousand pounds for the general services of the country, and without any specific appropriation of any part of this sum, for any particular service. The nature of such a credit seems to imply, in my conception of the interpretation and real meaning of words, a discretionary power to make use of such money towards such extraordinary and unlooked-for services, for which Parliament had not provided, trusting to the future responsibility of Ministers, that it would be disposed of in such manner as might be most beneficial to the nation. For my own part, Sir, I am free to confess, that in acceding to this vote of credit, I had it not at that time in contemplation that any part of this credit would be required for the assistance of the Emperor; and I believe, that so far from being singular in this opinion, most gentlemen, as well as myself, had expectations that his Imperial Majesty might have been enabled to have defended his dominions, and to have repelled the attacks of the enemy, without any pecuniary aid from England. If, however, Sir, from the disastrous events at the beginning of the last campaign—events which put the very existence of the Emperor in danger—at a time when some of his richest provinces were already in possession of the enemy, and two of the largest armies which had ever marched from France advancing with hasty strides to Vienna—if, as I say, Sir, under those circumstances, the Minister of this country, with a vote of credit of betwixt two and three millions at his command, had hesitated to give some pecuniary aid towards encouraging those glorious exertions, which not only rescued Germany but England from a very critical situation, such Minister would, in my humble opinion, have been unequal to direct the affairs of a great nation, and would have richly merited the bitterest reproaches and execrations of the people of this country. Let me entreat, Sir, that gentlemen will for a moment consider the situation to which this country would have been reduced, had the Emperor been compelled to make a separate peace with France, and that Republic thereby have been enabled to have marched down their numerous and victorious armies to the sea-coasts of Holland, Flanders, and France, to effect their favourite project of invading and of destroying this country. I am not one of those, Sir, who considers the invasion of England as an enterprize of either much difficulty or danger; or, as many gentlemen have observed, merely a bugbear to frighten and to alarm the inhabitants of this country. Whoever argues in this manner, I will venture to assert, is totally ignorant of the subject, and, not only if they believe it, most egregiously impose upon themselves, but, what is worse, deceive the people of England, by leading them into an unwise, as well as unjustifiable

security, and rendering them averse to adopt those salutary and necessary means of precaution which circumstances render necessary. Those parts of the coast which I have seen, and in parts where we are most vulnerable, so far from being impracticable or difficult of access to an enemy, are the most inviting for invasion, and for the debarkation of troops, of any country in Europe. I know that there are many gentlemen in this House, as well as without doors, who erroneously conclude, that so long as we preserve a naval superiority, the enemy will never dare to land in this country. No man can have a higher sense of the great and very respectable state of our marine than what I have, greater and more respectable than ever it was at any former period. At the same time, Sir, let us consider the various and distant services, on which more than one-half of our navy must necessarily be constantly employed; and I could appeal to many respectable naval officers, whom I now see in this House, whether, were our maritime force at home much more numerous, during certain seasons and winds, whether it could secure this country against invasion? Let gentlemen reflect, that the enemy's coasts, opposite to our own, are only distant a few hours sail; and the same winds which are favourable to the views of an enemy, are those in which our fleets could be of the least service.

In place of twelve hundred thousand pounds, fifty millions would not have placed us in that security in which we are at present, had those numerous French armies, who have since been employed upon the banks of the Rhine and in Italy, been directed towards this country. From those considerations, Sir, I am induced most heartily to concur in the proposed amendment; and am decidedly of opinion, that had not His Majesty's Ministers assisted his Imperial Majesty, and thereby allowed him to have sunk under the arms of France, they would in such case have richly deserved the curses of this country.

Colonel GASCOIGNE said, that he was the representative of a great commercial city, as well as the honourable Alderman (Combe). He did not often obtrude himself on the House, on account of his diffidence, but he was always willing to obey the voice of his constituents. He came down to the House expecting to hear a great and constitutional question debated; and with a determined resolution to vote in favour of the motion for censuring Ministers, which he thought would not have been brought forward except on full and sufficient grounds; but from what he had since heard, and from the precedents that were quoted, he was convinced that the transaction that was made the ground of a charge against him, had been the established practice of Government ever since

the Revolution, and was interwoven with the very spirit of the Constitution. He knew his constituents would now be convinced, by the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the measure was justifiable, and in voting against the motion of Mr. Fox, he was confident he voted according to their sentiments. He was not so much acquainted with commercial transactions, as to judge of what might have influenced the decision of the Common Hall of the city of London, on which so much stress had been laid. As to Mr. Alderman Combe's voting with the majority of the Common Hall, he made no doubt he would do the same upon any question whatever, which would imply censure on His Majesty's Ministers.

Mr. SHERIDAN. After the manner in which this subject has been debated to-night, I feel it impossible to give a silent vote. To the honourable gentleman behind me (Colonel Gascoigne), I readily yielded precedence, and felt the indulgence usually given to a new speaker, and I carefully abstained from giving any interruption which might add embarrassment to the diffidence natural upon such an occasion. I must confess, however, that the speech of that honourable gentleman was not a little singular. He reposed with the utmost confidence upon the truth of my right honourable friend's assertion, that the conduct of Ministers in the matter before the House was neither consistent with the principles of the Constitution, nor supported by precedents in Parliament. Impressed with this belief, he had come down to the House determined to commit the absurdity which he had reprobated so much in the conduct of the Common Hall of the city of London; for, he says, that he came down resolved upon the belief he had taken up upon his authority to vote in favour of the proposition of my right honourable friend. Though, upon the statement of my right honourable friend he assumed that the conduct of Ministers was defended by no precedent, since he has heard the artful representation and the eloquent speech of the right honourable gentleman; for dextrous in point of management, and eloquent in point of manner, it must be admitted to have been; the honourable gentleman has discovered that the sending of money to the Emperor without the consent of Parliament is a practice not only justified by example, but interwoven with the very spirit of the Constitution! It is, indeed, extraordinary that a Member of Parliament, whose duty it is to have some knowledge of the principles of the Constitution and the usages of Parliament, should confess that he only knew the practice to be unconstitutional upon the assertion that it is unprecedented, and that again he should so suddenly take it for granted that it is perfectly justifiable without

waiting for any reply to what he has heard in its defence. The honourable gentleman too, in a tone which in another speaker would be considered as harsh, censures the conduct of my honourable friend (Mr. Combe), for acting agreeably to the instructions of his constituents, and thinks that he would have been ready to support any proposition that came from the same quarter. But while he thus blames my right honourable friend with no small degree of asperity, and without much appearance of diffidence, he says with triumph, "I too come here to speak the sense of my constituents as well as my own opinion." When he came down, however, perfectly determined to support the proposition of my right honourable friend, how is he now so well acquainted with the sentiments of his constituents? By what means did he contrive to turn so soon the sentiments of his constituents to tally with his change of opinion, and by what new constitutional telegraph has he contrived to procure such rapid information? In truth, Sir, I wish the honourable Member joy of his conversion, and the Minister joy of his convert.

But, to proceed to the real question which is the subject of consideration, before any new propositions are offered, since there are already before the House motions so very different from each other as must necessarily embrace every variety of opinion. One honourable gentleman (Mr. Bragge), who moved the amendment, is determined to turn every expression of censure into a testimony of approbation. The honourable gentleman behind me (Mr. Nicholls) does not approve of the measures of Ministers upon this occasion; but he does not wish to shock the ears of the right honourable gentleman, who is so little pleased to hear his faults displayed and to see his errors recorded, with any bill of indemnity or any implication of censure. He wishes to have a bill, enacting that a similar application of the vote of credit shall not in future be made. To this last proposal I confess, I least of all can agree. I consider it to be a libel upon the Constitution, a libel upon our ancestors, to say that it requires the provision of new acts of Parliament to declare, that the money which the House of Commons voted for the purpose of defraying unforeseen charges, and answering a particular species of expenditure, should not be applied to purposes for which it obviously was not intended. The great argument which has converted so many gentlemen, and has had so great weight with the worthy Magistrates (who doubtless felt a just reluctance to condemn unheard, especially a Minister to whom they owed so many jobs), the great argument which has produced such distinguished conversions, and such speedy conviction, is this, that the measure at

first deemed so reprehensible is justified by precedent. It is however not a little extraordinary that while precedent so powerfully operates conviction, while it so totally changes the complexion of the measure, it is not to be permitted to pass as an additional corroboration of the practice, nor as an example for future imitation. With all these precedents to which they refer, and which they so readily admit, they do not venture to add the present. It is not to be drawn into precedent. In reality while they admit the cases which have been urged in justification, they say that the present instance is so superlatively wicked, so scandalous, so dangerous, so fatal in its operation, that it must not be established. It is a stretch beyond all former example, which it is not proper to repeat ; it is a rare and singular instance which future Parliaments are not to sanction, nor future Ministers to practise.

With regard to the sense of the people collected at common halls, which has been treated so superciliously, I would ask when a meeting is regularly convened for a specific purpose, and their sentiments are properly expressed, why they should not be entitled to respect ? The assertions of the worthy Alderman (Curtis) that the Common Hall in the city of London was not regularly conducted, is an unfair reflection upon the present Chief Magistrate, who, had he been a Member of the House, would have very emphatically answered such a charge. But if the complaint of the worthy Alderman proves any thing, it proves that in the city of London such was the general disapprobation which the conduct of Ministers has excited, that the result of the meeting was obvious ; that he might have heard it from the first person he met in the street. I don't know, indeed, by whom the information of the probable result was given to the worthy Alderman, whether by his correspondent, Mr. Mazzinghi, or the communicative hair-dresser. As to the regularity in the calling of the meeting, I am informed that one person, whether properly or improperly, but certainly consistently with custom, had not indeed signed the requisition himself, but gave authority for that purpose. But to return to the real point before the House : I cannot help regarding it as a curious circumstance that so many gentlemen appear to have come down pre-determined to support the opinion they had originally adopted. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Bragge) seems to have had his mind previously made up, and his proposition previously arranged. He does not seem to have been aware that a great part of the sums sent abroad were remitted to the army of Condé, to which his motion does not at all refer. The amendment is wholly silent upon this part of the motion of my right honourable friend. What is this but an implied censure

upon the transaction so far as it relates to the Prince of Condé? If it rescues from censure that part which concerns the Emperor, it leaves the other to stand upon the journals with the brand which is implied from its being passed over without notice, while the other is held up to approbation. This disposal of the money is likewise stated by the right honourable gentleman to be a justifiable use of this vote of credit, though in reality, part of the money was contained in the army extraordinaries, to which the defence does not apply. The point indeed is of the utmost importance, and the decision which the House shall pronounce upon its merit, is of equal consequence to maintain the dignity of its privileges and the respect of the Constitution. My right honourable friend in employing that copiousness of argument and the power of eloquence which belongs to him, felt the necessity of bringing forward every consideration that could induce the House, in circumstances like the present, to agree to any vote of censure. He entered into a detail, which, not the subject, but the dispositions of the House, demanded. Nor is it wonderful that the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) swerved so frequently from the point of the question, and endeavoured to fix the attention of the House upon what tended to mislead their judgement. With deference, however, to the example of my right honourable friend, I cannot help thinking that the real question lies within a narrow compass. It is the particular pride and the unrivalled glory of the British Constitution that its characters are so clear, so precise, so intelligible, that it is impossible to transgress its spirit, and to violate its principles without the crime being easily detected and the guilt clearly exposed. If there be any point upon which all declamation, all sophistry, all soaring flights of eloquence, all heroic professions of patriotism or disinterestedness, all calculated to dazzle or to amuse, are completely lost, it is upon a question like this. The proposition which my right honourable friend has moved consists of two parts, perfectly distinct. That part which we bring forward as a charge, we are bound to prove; but when we have established the principles of the Constitution, and alledged the facts by which they are violated, the *onus* lies upon the right honourable gentleman to show that the statement is fallacious, or to produce the circumstances of palliation by which the transgression is to be excused. In this view, therefore, we have to prove that certain sums are destined and appropriated to particular services. Here I will not examine whether the power of granting supplies and controuling their application be as ancient as the Government itself, and coeval with the existence of the Constitution. It is sufficient that I refer to the best times in which its principles were

established, and in which they were defended, by the struggles of the people for freedom. This salutary regulation arose from the abuses of the Government, from the misconduct of Ministers, from the treachery of Parliament, from tyranny, from corruption. The reign of Charles the Second is a sufficient authority for the appeal to history. At the Revolution it was solemnly recognized, and since that period it has been interwoven with our parliamentary usage. In this review I cannot but wonder at the stress which has been laid upon the precedents which have been quoted. It is arguing from the exception against the rule; it is erecting the deviation into the standard. But even these precedents, upon which so much stress has been laid; neither apply to the present case nor justify the particular measure. Among the earliest precedents which have been quoted is, that in 1706, of the advance to the Duke of Savoy, to the amount of 47,000*l*. If gentlemen, however, will take the trouble to look into the Journals they will find that this sum was granted during the recess of Parliament; that not only was the ally of this country placed in perilous circumstances, but that Turin was actually in a state of siege. A demand was made for 50,000*l*. and the letter which Mr. Secretary Harley sent in answer to the Ambassador of Savoy, will at once explain the principles of the Constitution and the inapplicability of the precedent. The letter states, that it is not practicable, according to the custom of the Constitution, while Parliament is not sitting, to comply with the request; yet, in the pressing circumstances of the case, Her Majesty was willing to grant a certain sum to be deducted out of the subsidy that was paid to the Duke of Savoy. Will it then be said, that in circumstances like these, when there was a certainty that the money was employed in a manner to which Parliament had consented, when it was to be deducted from a subsidy that had regularly been granted, will it be said that, either in the extent or in the principle, either in the circumstances or in its conduct, the present measure could be justified by an appeal to the authority of this precedent. This is the first of those four boasted precedents which have so readily convinced the right honourable gentleman of the propriety of the Minister's conduct. The next precedent was in 1742. The money was then disposed of when Parliament was not sitting, and it was afterwards moved in that House, that the sending sums to any foreign Prince, without the consent of Parliament, was a dangerous misapplication of the public money, and highly destructive of the Constitution. On these words an amendment was moved, adding that the measure was unavoidable, and that it was necessary for the interests of the common cause. At

that time, therefore, the measure was condemned, and the only justification set up was its indispensable necessity. If this necessity could now be proved by Ministers, then we, said Mr. Sheridan, have no ground to stand on. The next precedent was the case of Holland, in 1617, when the money was taken out of the secret-service money; and it is well known, that, by Mr. Burke's bill, if the Secretary of State makes oath the money was actually employed for the interest of the country, no farther inquiry can take place.

Such, then, are the precedents by which so much effect is produced, by which the jealousy of the privileges of the House is to be superseded, on the credit of which every idea of atonement for our violated laws and constitution is to be given up. The right honourable gentleman says, that any farther precedent during times which we consider as the worst of times, and during a Parliament which we have deemed so hostile to the liberties of the country, would be received with little respect. It is true that the times of the last Parliament, and the administration of the right honourable gentleman, I do not hold in the highest veneration. It is true that I do not think that Parliament a meritorious Parliament. What, however, must have been the opinion of the right honourable gentleman himself of that Parliament, when out of the alarmists who have seceded from our ranks, he has sent so many to shelter themselves from danger upon the higher ground, and to hide their heads in coronets from the form which they affected to dread? Surely if the right honourable gentleman entertains so high an opinion of that Parliament, he would not thus anxiously have removed so many of those who composed the part which merited the distinction with which he has thought proper to honour them. The right honourable gentleman wonders, that after having allowed the subject to pass over upon the first day on which it was brought forward, we should now so keenly make it the object of investigation. He seems to conceive us to be bound by the same rules which limit the country in the prosecution of a thief, where, unless the hue and cry be raised, the benefit of prosecution is taken away. We have been called, ironically I suppose, a vigilant Opposition; and, God knows, there is no reason to remind us that it is small. But I am ready to put in for my share of blame for want of vigilance, when the circumstance which is now erected into a precedent took place upon the communication of the intended loan to the Emperor, by the King's message, in the year 1795. But even any negligence which might have been displayed upon that occasion is by no means of such a magnitude as our acquiescing in the present measure would imply. The situations were very

different. Then there was a certainty that the advances to the Emperor would be repaid, because they were to be deducted from the loan which was to be granted. In the present case, the circumstances are very different. The concealment which has taken place effectually precludes the House from remedying any negligence that had been committed, or repairing any mischief that has been produced. This least of all can be of any authority to the right honourable gentleman; and I defy any man to say, that the circumstances of the case will bear him out in the conclusion which he is desirous to establish.

The right honourable gentleman says, that he has taken larger votes of credit in proportion to the general expence of the war than any former Minister; but if he applies the funds which are destined for other objects towards expences for which he ought particularly to have provided, of what importance is it, though it were true, that there are fewer extraordinaries? We only ask, that he will not delude the country, that he will not apply grants for prospective services to those which already have been incurred. If it was not to conceal entirely what was in his contemplation, why was it unfit that the House should be acquainted with the intention to take the Prince of Condé's corps into our pay? He accepted bills before the vote of credit was granted, and had even begun to pay them. The House of Commons was deceived by a false account, which stated, that 300,000*l.* had been issued to the Paymaster of the forces, while in reality it had been sent to pay the French troops we had taken into our service. If, wherever the words "vote of credit" occurred, according to the real intention of that sum, the House should substitute "provision for unforeseen expences," the absurdity of applying it to services already incurred would be completely detected. What appearance would it have to continue this apparent inconsistency with the absurdity of the argument of the right honourable gentleman? The right honourable gentleman says, that it would not have been equally effectual to have tried the experiment of a loan, and that this mode has succeeded. Here he enters into a high-sounding description of the splendid achievements of the Austrians; extols their triumphs in a tone of as high exultation as if it were recording his own exploits, and praises their masterly retreat, which I am sure was not conducted with greater dexterity than that of the right honourable gentleman to-day. All this brilliant declamation is very fine, but it is nothing to the purpose. If the Austrians have achieved all this success, might not the same advantages have resulted from a more constitutional application of the public money? I am ready

to give the right honourable gentleman credit for the truth which he may occasionally communicate to the House ; and I believe he speaks correctly when he tells us, that last year, by the measures he adopted, he gave one chance for the safety of Europe. The real matter of congratulation, then, was, that the French, in their victorious career, had not the whole of Germany ; and the triumph of the right honourable gentleman concludes his panegyric with a quotation which has no great application to the relative situation of our allies at the present moment. The right honourable gentleman says, could Parliament have judged of the propriety of the measure ? I answer, yes ; and might have judged, too, upon the same grounds upon which Ministers formed their judgement. The argument, that it was dangerous to make the measure public, because the sum granted might have appeared inadequate, is applicable to every vote of subsidy, to every vote of supply, to every measure of preparation, to the votes for the army and navy, and to every department of the Government. If it might be attended with a slight degree of disadvantage to publish that information to the enemy, it was more than compensated by fairness, by straight-forwardness, and by manliness of conduct. Indeed, the principle on which this measure was defended, appears more dangerous than even any application of it can be thought impolitic. It arrogates to Ministers a right to judge of the extent, as well as the mode of public expenditure ; it is erecting the Minister into an absolute Dictator ; it is more than mortal presumption ; it is a pretension beyond humanity to claim ; it is usurping the attributes of the Deity, the power of omniscience and infallibility, the power of refusing the desires and disappointing the wishes of those over whom they rule. Joined with the other part of the conduct of Ministers, it, indeed, forms the subject of serious alarm. If they claim the right of landing foreign troops without consent of Parliament, and of paying them by this delicate process, without application to this House, where is the security left for our liberties and for our constitution ? One honourable gentleman thought he saw in the vote of credit, an intimation of sending money to the Emperor ; but if he saw it then, it must have been equally discernible to every gentleman in the kingdom, and thus the mischief arising from publicity must have been incurred. But, he would ask, upon what pretence could it be inferred from the vote of credit, that any part of it was destined to a different purpose from the vote of credit of the preceding year ? When the Minister had abandoned his first intention of raising a loan of three millions for the Emperor, he conceived that he had also abandoned his purpose of remitting any money to the

Emperor without the sanction of Parliament. It was evident that the Minister did not wish to hang a German loan about the neck of the dissolving Parliament, because he well knew it would hurt his friends in the event of a new election ; it was understood that he meant to keep his motion for an early attempt on the maiden affections of the new Parliament ; but why then did he not apply to this new Parliament ? Instead of doing so, he has the audacity to say, “ I felt myself bound to keep my promise pledged to the Emperor for farther remittances.” But was this a declaration fit to make to that House or the Country, when the money was to be taken from the pockets of a British Parliament ? And, was a vote of thanks now to be moved for what was deserving the most severe reprobation ? Mr. Sheridan considered this as a new process of smuggling money out of the kingdom ; as a fraud likewise on the subscribers to the new loan ; because it was not till after the subscription to the new loan, that it came out that there was a sum of 1,200,000*l.* minus of the specie of this country. Mr. Sheridan concluded with observing, that there was only one point which he should notice, and that was the *argumentum ad hominem* which the right honourable gentleman used against his right honourable friend. But with what ill grace did this come from him, whose whole ministerial conduct had been one continued attack upon the liberties of his country. Were it possible that his venerable and illustrious father could look down upon the three last years of his history, to see him sit to applaud his confidential friends in reviling the sacred institution of Juries, and that one of the most illustrious pensioners of the Crown had not even been rebuked for saying, that courts of justice were become nothing more than schools for sedition ; to see him covering the whole face of the country with barracks and bastilles, without even submitting the expence of their erection as a question to Parliament ; to see the whole country under military government, and the people placed under the subjection of the bayonet ; while, as if this were not sufficient, their mouths were shut up, and themselves prevented from meeting to consult on their grievances ; and proceeding in his climax of constitutional violence, wresting from them, one after another, all their rights, till he came at last to take out of the hands of the representatives the guardian disposal of their money ? When he recollected the means by which that right honourable gentleman came into power, the arts by which he had retained it, and the contempt with which he had treated the House of Commons, and the disregard of its declared opinion which he had shewn, how could it be thought that he would resign himself to its judgement with that submission which

the conclusion of his speech bespoke? No credit could be given to that idle rhodomontade, that unmeaning cant of resignation. Of all the Ministers that ever directed the affairs of this country, the right honourable gentleman was the man who had employed in his administration the worst of means, and entailed upon his country the greatest of evils. If two motives could be assigned for his conduct; if it could be said on the one hand that he might be guided by views of power and sentiments of ambition, or by feelings of patriotism and virtue, he should not hesitate to ascribe the former to a Minister whose whole life had marked the same total disregard for the one, as implicit devotion to the other.

Sir WILLIAM PULTENEY said, that after what had passed to-night every body must see that this was a very important subject, because it involved a great constitutional question. He had always understood it to be the exclusive privilege of the House of Commons to vote money for the public service. He understood it to be also the privilege of the House of Commons to controul the distribution of the public money. He knew of no authority that led to any doubt of the former of these positions, nor had he any upon the latter. It had been contended, however, upon the discussion of this subject, that the power of distribution was given to the Minister to the extent of a vote of credit. Now the House would do well to examine what had been the practice of our ancestors with respect to the distribution of the public money. They all know what that practice was in ancient times. If the House of Lords amended a money bill, the practice of the House of Commons in former times was to kick the bill out of the House of Commons. That practice had been set aside in modern times. We were become more polite, and the mode now was to reject a money bill if the Lords had amended it. Such was the ancient, and such the modern practice of the House of Commons upon money bills, if the Lords should offer to amend them; and should they be more complaisant to a Minister than they were to the House of Lords? For his part he saw no reason why they should, but many why they should not. Some gentlemen had this night given up the opinions they formerly held upon this question, for reasons which they seemed to regard as clearly demonstrative, that by agreeing to this measure of the Minister, the House did not give up its controul over the public purse. He owned that was by no means clear to him. On the contrary, he thought they would give up that power if they did not mark this measure with their disapprobation. He must observe, that the Minister had this night relied a good deal upon precedents. He did not seem the other night, when this

matter was brought forward, to know he had any precedents that would keep his conduct in this case in countenance. Neither did he say any thing of such precedents in the discussion of the subsidies that had been before the House. Nor did he, in the opening of his defence to-night, tell the House he placed much dependence on the precedents he had to quote; saying only in a general way that he could state them: accordingly he drew out many instances of cases, but they did not apply to the subject which was now before the House. The Minister said a good deal upon the necessity of the measure, but nothing of that kind could do away the doctrine that the House of Commons had constitutionally the controul of the purse, nor the duty of the Minister to submit the measure to the House of Commons much sooner than he did. Gentlemen who now defended the Minister maintained that vote of credit was the grant of a sum for which the Minister was answerable to the House, and that he ought to have the controul of its distribution: that the Minister was bound to give to the House an account of the whole proceeding. Now he wished the House to examine what sort of an account might be given in such a case. The Minister might say that the whole sum granted by the vote of credit was given to a foreign Prince. How could the House have any assurance of the truth of such an assertion? How could they be sure that such foreign Prince had received it? How, if he had received it, could they learn the manner in which such foreign Prince had applied it? The House had no power to put any questions to a foreign Prince, nor any means of receiving official information from him. The power of the House was very different with regard to the Minister of this country. They could call on him to lay before them an account of all the money they voted for the public service. He did not make these observations because he distrusted the present Minister or suspected him of any sinister motives. Nor did he make these observations because he disapproved of the present or of the last Parliament, or that he saw any thing very dangerous in the present times. On the contrary, he had a good opinion of the last Parliament, a good one of this; a good one of the present times; but the time might come when our situation in respect to Government and Parliament might be very different from what they are at present, and it was the principle of the measure that excited his alarm. Suppose the hour should arrive when a Minister of this country might wish to put an end altogether to the power of the House of Commons. Suppose the House had voted him 500,000*l.* by a vote of credit, for the service of a foreign Prince in alliance with this country, and that after all not one penny of it should be given

to such a Prince, but that the whole of it should be given to the Members of that House, to assist the Minister in his wishes to overturn the Constitution of this Country? He wished to know what security the people would have in that case for the Constitution? Bad precedents ought to be resisted at all times, and the House ought to watch over them with jealousy, but more particularly in good times, for it was then the public were least liable to suspicion, and consequently it was then they were most likely to be carried, because it was in such times that the public were least disposed to examine what was passing in Parliament: and precedents which were passed in good times might be made very dangerous use of in bad ones. On this account it was that he had taken so much alarm at this measure; he had attended to all that the Minister had said upon this subject, and he was ready to confess he thought the Minister by no means justified from what had appeared in the discussion of the subject. But an honourable gentleman on the other side of the House had moved an amendment to the original motion; that amendment, in his opinion, although it came from a gentleman who defended the Minister, implied a degree of censure upon his conduct in this matter; he was content with any degree of censure, rather than not have any. Some gentlemen seemed to think there was no blame to be attached to Ministers upon this occasion. He thought there was a great deal, and therefore that there should be some mark set upon such conduct to denote the disapprobation of the House.

He proposed to say a few words on the excuse of the Minister to-night. The Minister had said a great deal on the exigency of the times; and it appeared that the Directors of the Bank had told the Minister that they disapproved of a loan to the Emperor. If that loan was right, and he thought it was, he did not see the Minister should be controlled by the Directors of the Bank. This seemed to him to be a very improper procedure; it was a species of *imperium in imperio*. He had no idea that the Directors of the Bank should control the operations of Government. Why should the Minister transact this business in a private manner because the Directors of the Bank were against a public loan. The Minister neither had, nor ought to have, any power that was not controlable by the people in Parliament; but Government had, and ought to have, a great deal of power that was not controlable by the Bank of England. It had been observed that specie was taken out of the country to a great amount in the course of the present war, and some gentlemen apprehended great danger from that circumstance. This did not appear to him in so formidable a light as it did to

some, for the property did not all go in specie out of the kingdom for the purpose of the aids that had been granted to foreign states ; much of it had gone in goods ; and of the money, much would come back again in the course of commerce. He found no fault with the Minister upon that account ; but what he found fault with, and must decidedly condemn, was, that if he thought the measure of a loan to the Emperor was right, as he himself certainly did, he did not come forward to Parliament at once, and say so. Why did he not say boldly that it was a point in which the interest of the country was deeply involved ? That the interest of all Europe was involved in it ? Why did he suffer himself to be terrified by the disapprobation of the Directors of the Bank ? How was he sure that he had not caused an injury to Europe by being thus intimidated ? Why should the operations of Government be thus crippled by the Directors of the Bank ? He thought it probable that the interests of Europe had been injured by this caution of the Minister ; for he was not sure, that if the French knew that the Emperor had three millions from this country in the course of the last campaign, they would have attempted what they did. These things the Minister ought to have brought before Parliament openly and boldly, and not to have suffered himself to be controlled by the Directors of the Bank. Having said this, he would now add, that with regard to the precedents which had been quoted by the Minister, he was not convinced by any of them that his conduct was justifiable in endeavouring to infringe on the power of the House of Commons over the public purse. The power of that House was two-fold : it had a power over the purse, and a power over the sword. The former they possessed, as had been stated several times to-night ; the latter they had from the mutiny act. Let but one of those be taken away, and the power of that House would be instantly reduced to nothing. He concluded with repeating a wish that the conduct of the Minister upon this occasion, might be marked with the distinct disapprobation of the House.

Mr. WILBERFORCE supported the conduct of the Minister, and in doing so, took notice of some parts of the speech of Mr. Sheridan. He was inclined to think that that gentleman was not in the House on a former night, when the present subject was brought forward, for he seemed to have misconceived what he had said on that occasion, for which he appealed to those who surrounded him. What he said was this : That he apprehended a vote of credit gave to Ministers a general discretion ; that in the exercise of that general discretion, they were to select the objects and lay out the money ; but that the whole of their conduct was liable to the

subsequent revision of the House of Commons. That was the declaration he made, and by that declaration he meant to abide. He then proceeded to state the impression which the whole of this debate had made upon his mind. Here he could not help observing, that the honourable gentleman, to whose speech he had alluded, had made use of every possible means to take away the impression made by the speech of his right honourable friend who had so ably and fairly defended himself to-night. He had attempted to take away the force of the precedents which had been quoted to-night. His right honourable friend had referred to ten or eleven precedents, and had alluded to a mass more of them, which he only forbore quoting. The honourable Baronet who had just spoken, was not, he believed, in the House when the Minister had said a few words upon this subject the other night; if he had, he would have found that the Minister at that time declined entering upon his defence; no wonder, therefore, that he did not then quote any precedents, for he reserved every thing he had to say upon the subject to the present night. He had now, however, proved that it was the general practice of Parliament to give to the Minister power by a vote of credit, in the manner which he had stated. That power was afterwards to be reversed or confirmed by Parliament; and until so confirmed, it was not complete. The Minister, in arguing these points, had referred to ten or eleven precedents, which the honourable gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) had dexterously reduced to three or four. The Minister had given instances of money being given to foreign Princes, as this had been given to the Emperor, without the previous knowledge of Parliament. It remained for the Minister then only to prove, that in so doing he had acted according to the necessity of the case. This he had done by explaining to them the situation of affairs upon the Continent, and at home; and this by the testimony of those who were best qualified to form an opinion upon such subject. These gentlemen were clearly of opinion, that this measure could not have been carried on in any other way, without infinite mischief to the interests of this country. Had the Minister disclosed this matter sooner than he did, he was of opinion that he would have been guilty of doing that which he could not have honestly avowed at the time; because he could not, as Minister, honestly avow that which would be injurious to this country. But the right honourable gentleman on the other side had said, he did not understand how this could be more difficult to be done publicly than privately; upon this he could only repeat what he had said already, that if done publicly, it must have been done at once, which was liable to this

objection ; either the sum might be too large or too small for the purpose intended to be answered by it. In the case of being too small, it might operate as a declaration of weakness to the enemy, which might be attended with great evil. In the other event, that of being too large, it might be injurious to our pecuniary interests. Whereas, by the mode which the Minister has adopted, the inconveniencies of either extreme were avoided. It was certainly on that ground that gentlemen who took particular notice of the quantum of the sums, had chiefly approved of the measure, taking also into their consideration the benefits which this country had derived from the measure. It appeared by the cases which had been quoted, that money had formerly been issued under the same form, and on occasions much less urgent than the present. Indeed, when he considered the matter fully, he was rather surprized that gentlemen should persist in their opposition to it.

He must take notice of what was said by the honourable gentleman, to whose speech he had so frequently alluded to-night, with regard to the ancestor of his right honourable friend, and as to what he would have said of his son, were that great person now among us. Perhaps, if he saw some of the measures of Administration, without seeing the necessity of them, he might be disposed to feel disapprobation ; but if he saw what industry had been employed to destroy the Constitution by many persons out of doors, and how some of those persons were defended within, then that great Statesman would be fully satisfied that his son conducted himself as a man who loved the Constitution of this country.

Mr. W. SMITH said, that at so late an hour, and when the matter in question had been so very ably debated, he would not trespass at any length upon the time of that House. He thought that, in a case of that nature, it would be much better to go by the authority of books written upon the most mature deliberation, by persons who had well studied the subject, and who were competent to judge upon it. He then read over the passages in Mr. Hatsell's Book of Precedents produced by Mr. Fox, which, he said, he thought were stronger than any precedents which could be produced, as precedents were generally made to apply to any case, from mere circumstances of casual resemblance. From these books, he was of opinion that the Minister had acted wrong ; and the amendment itself contained a kind of acknowledgment which would, he thought, prevent the error from being repeated, or the same principle from being acted upon again. He could not, indeed, but remark, that the amendment, although introduced by the Minister's friend, conveyed considerable censure upon the Minister ; and,

taking it in that light, he could not object to its adoption, although the conduct, which had been pursued, might deserve a stronger censure.

The question being called for,

Mr. FOX in reply began by adverting to the allusions which had been made to himself. The right honourable gentleman had not thought it sufficient to defend himself, but he had chosen to accuse his accusers. The right honourable gentleman had said that his character was hostile to that of the last Parliament, and that because he was generally in opposition to the majority of Parliament, he was to be considered as disqualified from vindicating their privileges. This was the train and spirit of the observation—so that according to the right honourable gentleman, every Member of that House was disqualified from discussing constitutional questions who did not enjoy the smiles of the Minister, and prove his love and regard for the liberties of his country by his servility and subserviency to the Administration for the time being. Where, Mr. Fox demanded, could the House really look for the defenders of the Constitution but among those who, disdaining the considerations of places and pensions, titles and ribbands, devoted their lives, and such talents as providence had endowed them withal, to the services of the public, in an honest vigilance with respect to the measures of Government, with no reward but the approbation of their conscience? The right honourable gentleman attacked his enemies without any regard to his friends; for if it were true that to have been long in opposition disqualified a person from asserting the character of Parliament, and vindicating the Constitution, what must be the situation into which he put his new friends? What would become of the Duke of Portland and Mr. Burke? For himself he took the imputation of hostility to Government, and to the Parliaments that had supported Government, as a compliment. He gloried in having been hostile to the Parliament that spent above 100,000,000*l.* of money in subjugating America, and in being hostile to the last Parliament who supported the Ministers in undertaking a war unnecessarily, and unprovoked. He certainly thought himself, upon comparison, better entitled than the right honourable gentleman to defend the Constitution; he, who at the end of the fourth campaign of a most wasteful war, could only boast at the expence of more than 100,000,000*l.* that “we had achieved a chance for saving the Constitution.” With him the standard of merit was political servility, and he who voted with independence was pronounced to be hostile to the Constitution. If the question were, whether Parliament was to be defended against

some pretended faction out of doors, the right honourable gentleman might give himself the air of superior title to be its advocate, because, as the Minister of the Crown, he had chosen to bid defiance to every thing in the popular form of our system; but when the question at issue was between the Crown and the Parliament, it surely could be no more of a point which of the two had the superior claim to be the advocate of the privileges of that House. It was not now a complaint of a Mr. Paine—not an alarm about the many innocent persons whom he had brought to trial, and what, thank God, had been protected by the laws of the country; but a more formidable enemy to the privileges of Parliament now presented itself, the executive branch armed with all the powers which it had lately obtained. What passage of his life, Mr. Fox demanded, could they select as a proof that he was not the man to support the Constitution, against such an enemy, rather than the right honourable gentleman, whose whole life, almost, had been devoted to the encroachments of the Crown? Let him ask even his new friends, even the honourable gentleman then at his side (Mr. Windham), whether, if they wanted an associate, not an associate to carry on a war for the purpose of crushing liberty in France, not an associate to carry on a war along with the despots of Europe, for the purpose of reducing all nations to slavery, since for such an associate they would naturally look to the right honourable gentleman; but if they wanted an associate to defend the Constitution of England against all attacks, whether they would not even yet come over rather to his side of the House than look to the right honourable gentleman? Whether they would not rather look to him, who had never once abandoned the cause of the people and of Parliament, rather than to the right honourable gentleman, who had in no one instance supported them? He had been forced to say so much in answer to the usual declamatory attack which the right honourable gentleman had made upon him personally, which was his favourite topic, and in the present session his constant resource. In his opening on the subject he had avoided every foreign observation, and he should now come back to the question before the House. He had said on the first day that this unconstitutional measure was made known, that it was a measure so fraught with danger, that if it were admitted, it went in fact to the doctrine that during war the Constitution ought to be suspended, and that the Minister of the Crown should be appointed Dictator. Yet, now it was asserted, that he had spoken of it at first as merely an objectionable measure. He had spoken of it from the first moment in the same terms. He had put the question hypothetically

—he had said that, even admitting that Germany had been saved by the succour given to the Emperor, and, with Germany, that even Great Britain had been saved, still the measure was not justified, because the same succour might have been given by constitutional means. Parliament might have been consulted, and the whole done in a way that would have saved us from this outrage on our best security. Since the first opening of the business, it had been discovered that a great part of the money had gone to the maintenance of the Prince of Condé's army. Now surely there could have been no danger in avowing this to Parliament. It did not even appear in the distribution-paper of the vote of credit, that the money had been sent for the maintenance of the Prince of Condé's army, though it was now thought adviseable to state it in that way. Here then was proof on the face of it of juggling and fraud—for finding it taken up by the House, the right honourable gentleman had chosen to put it into the vote of credit; but, said the right honourable gentleman, it is a superficial view of the subject to take the account of the remittances from the dates of the issues—they ought to be taken from the period of the engagements being formed; and therefore though the money appeared to be paid during the sitting of Parliament, the engagements were entered into during the recess. He should have a very contemptible opinion of the understanding of the House, and of the people of England, if they permitted themselves to be cajoled by so trifling and unfounded a distinction; and if they did not express their resentment at the insult which it conveyed upon them. For what did it amount to? That the Chancellor of the Exchequer first promises, what he has no right to promise, namely, succours to a foreign power to be advanced from time to time. Parliament meets before those succours came to be sent. A constitutional Minister, conscious of having done an extraordinary thing, which, however, the pressing necessity of the case might warrant, would have taken the very first moment to communicate what he had done, to lay the whole circumstances of the case before them, and to request a bill of indemnity. But no such thing! He did not think it wise and safe to trust the secret to Parliament until he had fulfilled his engagements. Perhaps a greater outrage on the dignity of the House could not be offered than was contained in this explanation. He, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, could only safely be trusted with the disposition of the money of the people of England, but to give to their representatives even a hint of what he was doing with it, might have utterly defeated the very end of the measure. Parliament might have viewed the measure in three ways. They

might have thought the conduct of the right honourable gentleman in the engagements he had formed perfectly proper, and have declared their approbation of the measure—or they might have thought the measure improper and indiscreet in itself—but yet being undertaken, thought it unwise and dangerous to stop its execution; in either of these two ways there would have been no essential inconvenience in making known the matter to Parliament on the first day of the meeting. But there was a third mode of viewing the subject. They might have thought it a measure so utterly unwise and improper—so injurious and fatal, that they not only would have censured the Minister for making the engagements, but have prevented their execution. But this he had taken care to provide against. “No, no,” said he, “you may censure me; you may attack my character; but I have taken care that you shall not save your money. Thank God, your money is gone to Germany! You cannot get it back again, whatever you do with me. My life is not implicated in the proceeding, but my honour is in your hands, and I abide the responsibility of the measure.” Mr. Fox demanded, if this was language to be endured? Was it not an insulting degradation of Parliament, to say that they were not fit to be consulted on the disposition of the money of their constituents? Was it not to say, that he was a better judge than the House of Commons; or did he think that it would have degraded his dignity in the eyes of foreign Statesmen, and foreign Cabinets, to own that he must consult the British Parliament before he parted with British money? This was exactly what the Constitution imposed upon a British Minister—What every man who venerated that Constitution wished to see enforced—that a British Minister should be forced to make known to foreign statesmen and foreign despots—that, however, they might trample on their miserable people, and rob and plunder them at their pleasure,—there was one chosen, one enviable spot upon the surface of the earth where men had asserted their rights, and would not be treated as slaves. If it was done for the pretext of secrecy, he would prove that such secrecy was as false in policy as it was odious in morality. The ignorance of the extent of the remittances would increase the terror of the transport of our specie—and accordingly, in August and September last, when the rumour of these remittances got abroad, the scarcity of money was the greatest, if they might judge from the discounts on navy bills, and the price of the funds. Was it to be believed that the succour to the Emperor would not have been more efficacious if known to all Europe? Would it not have had influence upon France if they had known that the Austrians were to be sup-

plied with British gold? or was he afraid that it would have damped the ardour of despotism, that the Austrians would have fought with less spirit if the money had come to them, tainted with the Republican odour of the British Constitution? What was there in the right honourable gentleman that they should confide in him such monstrous powers? And yet he should rather confide in him personally than he would in office—It was not the man so much as the Chancellor of the Exchequer he dreaded. Good God! if a Chancellor of the Exchequer can give away to a foreign Prince 1,200,000*l.* without making it even known to Parliament, what might he not do? What security had they for any thing else? Mr. Fox then animadverted on the amendment, which, he said, was inapplicable, since it left out one compleat branch of the charge, the money sent to the Prince of Condé's army—and it talked of not drawing the practice into a precedent, except in case of necessity, which wanted no precedent at all, since obvious and imperious necessity must bring its own justification. He then went over the precedents, and shewed that they were all inapplicable, even the last,—the only precedent likely to countenance an infraction of the Constitution, drawn from his own Administration under the support of the last Parliament. The right honourable gentleman had laid particular stress on the precedent of 1744, in Mr. Pelham's Administration; a precedent which Mr. Fox asserted so far from tending to support his defence, was directly unfavourable to his own. In the case of Mr. Pelham, whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer had exultingly described as a constitutional Minister; the money sent abroad, was sent when the Parliament was not sitting; in the present case, it was done while Parliament was sitting. In the case of Mr. Pelham, the sum was small, only forty thousand pounds. In the present case, it was no less than fourteen hundred thousand. In Mr. Pelham's case, small as the sum was, the matter was seriously and warmly taken up by the Parliament; and how was it disposed of? Not by any amendment, but by the previous question. Afterwards the papers relative to the matter were moved for by the Ministers themselves, and the whole was sanctioned on the ground of necessity. In the year 1744; this constitutional Minister, Mr. Pelham, stopped a pending treaty, because a hundred thousand pounds was asked for on the part of our ally, till he could obtain the sanction of Parliament, before he would advance the money. But it seems, that because the opposition had failed in vigilance, in this instance of money advanced in 1795, this was to justify Ministers in going on in the same career. How did this apply to the conduct of Ministers, in the prosecutions, or rather

the persecutions, that took place four years ago for libels, when by the distorted laws of that country of legal tyranny, where they had obtained verdicts, had they softened punishment or granted mercy, because similar libels had in former instances been passed over with impunity? Mr. Fox concluded, that no advantage had been gained by the manner in which the business had been done; and after hearing the Minister say, that he would persist in the same course, he would only say, that if he continued to attend the House he would not relinquish his endeavours to obtain marked disapprobation of the measure, and if otherwise, he had no doubt but the people would find abler advocates. But if this measure was not reprobated, he should think that man a hypocrite who pretended to see any distinction between this Government and an absolute Monarchy. He had made use, in former days, of strong opinions—he did not retract one of them—he had no hesitation in saying that occasions might arise even in a comparatively free country, when men might be driven to the necessity of resistance.

The House then divided on Mr. Bragge's amendment;

Ayes, 185; Noes, 81.—Majority, 104.

Previous to finally disposing of the question, Mr. Fox took an opportunity to move two amendments:

Second amendment (by Mr. Fox) proposed, to insert after the word "credit," in the first proposed amendment, the words,

"It being the opinion of that House that certain of the sums
"stated in the papers laid before the House, to have been issued on
"the authority of the vote of credit, were not paid on the said au-
"thority."—Negatived.

Third amendment (by Mr. Fox) proposed, to add at the end of the first proposed amendment the words,

"Although no documents have been laid before the House to
"prove either the necessity or the expediency of the said measure."
Negatived.

Resolved finally,

"That the measure of advancing the several sums of money,
"which appear, from the accounts presented to the House in this
"session of Parliament, to have been issued for the service of the
"Emperor, though not to be drawn into precedent, but upon oc-
"casions of special necessity, was, under the peculiar circum-
"stances of the case, a justifiable and proper exercise of the dis-
"cretion vested in His Majesty's Ministers by the vote of credit,
"and calculated to produce consequences which have proved highly
"advantageous to the common cause, and to the general interests
"of Europe."

List of the Minority on the motion of Mr. Fox, for a direct censure on Ministers, for advancing money to the Emperor and the Prince of Condé, without the consent or knowledge of Parliament :

Anson, T.	Lemon, Sir W.
Aubrey, Sir John	Lemon, J.
Baker, J.	Lloyd, J. R.
Bampfylde, Sir C.	Martin, J.
Barclay, G.	Milbanke, R.
Baring, Sir F.	Mildmay, Sir H.
Beaucherk, C. G.	Milner, Sir W.
Biddulph, R.	Nichols, J.
Bird, W. W.	North, D.
Bouverie, Honourable E.	Northey, W.
Bouverie, Honourable W.	Peters, H.
Brogden, J.	Plumer, W.
Burch, J. R.	Porter, G.
Burdett, F.	Pulteney, Sir W.
Byng, G.	Pulteney, Sir J.
Cavendish, Lord G.	Purfe, H.
Clayton, Sir R.	Rawdon, Honourable G.
Coke, Ed.	Rawdon, Honourable J.
Coke, T. W.	Richardson, J.
Colhoun, W.	Russel, Lord J.
Courtenay, J.	Russel, Lord W.
Davers, Sir C.	St. John, St. Andrew
Dashwood, Sir J.	Sawbridge, S. E.
Dundas, C.	Scudamore, J.
Dundas, Honourable L.	Sheridan, R. B.
Erskine, Honourable T.	Shum, G.
Fitzpatrick, General	Sitwell Sitwell
Fletcher, Sir H.	Spencer, Lord R.
Foley, Honourable E.	Stanley, Lord
Fox, Right Honourable C. J.	Sturt, C.
Grey, C.	Tarleton, General
Green, J.	Taylor, M. A.
Hare, J.	Townshend, Lord J.
Harrison, J.	Tuiston, Honourable H.
Hussey, W.	Tuiston, Honourable J.
Jefferys, N.	Vane, Sir F. F.
Jekyll, J.	Vyner, R.
Jervois, J. C.	Whitbread, S.
Kemp, T.	Wahwyn, J.
Knight, R. Payne	Western, C. C.
Lawrence, E.	

TELLERS—Alderman Combe, and W. Smith.

Thursday, 15th December.

Mr. WINDHAM moved for leave to bring in a bill to explain and amend the act for raising the Supplemental Militia, relative to its operation within the Tower Hamlets. Granted.

It being moved that Mr. Allen have leave to go into the country on his private affairs,

Sir WILLIAM YOUNG condemned the practice of granting leave of absence, without a special reason, while a call of the House was impending; he therefore moved, by way of amendment, that the words "after Saturday next" be added. On this question, after a few observations, a division took place, when there appeared,

For the amendment, 18; against it, 33.—Majority, 15.

Sir WILLIAM YOUNG then moved, "That no Member have leave of absence till after Saturday next," on which the House again divided,

For his motion, 33; against it, 13.—Majority, 20.

Friday, 16th December.

The following are the names of the Members appointed to try the merits of the Southwark election petition:

Honourable Edward James Elliot, Chairman.

James Adams, Esq.

W. James Dennison, Esq.

John Spalding, Esq.

G. Porter, Esq.

Sir W. W. Wynne, Bart.

F. Fane, Esq.

W. Cunningham Bontine, Esq.

Lord C. H. Somerset

Napier Christie Burton, Esq.

Lord Edward James Stuart

Sir John Fleming Leicester

Lord Porchester.

NOMINEES,

Charles Dundas, Esq.

John Anstruther, Esq.

Mr. TAYLOR requested the attention of the House to a subject which, he said, he was aware required an apology as coming from him. He was sorry to be obliged, even for a moment, to detain the attention of the House, and to direct it to so mean an individual as himself. The personal attack of which he had to complain, was also an attack on the privileges, and a violation of the rules of the House, and as such, at least it was not to be overlooked. As a Member, therefore, of the House, he begged leave to claim their protection against a scandalous and malicious libel which had lately appeared in an evening paper called The Sun. In The Sun of Wednesday last, gentlemen might see, if they would take the trouble to read it, a most false and malicious misrepresentation of the sentiments he had delivered in the debate of the preceding night: nor did the reporter of his speech content himself with putting complete nonsense in his mouth, and notions which he never entertained; but to this meditated misrepresentation of his sentiments, was added a string of comments, which could leave no

doubt on the mind of any impartial man, of the illiberal and malicious intention of the writer. Those who conducted the paper might, perhaps, be a little partial to the present Administration ; for which he had nothing to alledge against it, nor did he mean, on the present occasion, to insinuate a charge against any person who had a share in His Majesty's Government. He should be ashamed of imputing to any one of them a desire to promote, or a wish to connive at any ill-founded representation of this kind against any individual, still less, if possible, against any Member of that House. It had been of late an indulgence of the House to permit strangers to be present, and to give to the public accounts of its proceedings. No person wished less than he did himself to refuse a continuance of that indulgence. He wished all the discussions of the House to be open, because he was well convinced of the public utility of making known to the nation the conduct of its representatives. He was aware also that some misrepresentations must unavoidably take place in the course of daily publication ; and when that happened to be the case, without any malicious intent, he should be one of the first to attribute it to the incorrectness with which such reports must necessarily be attended. He was as little desirous, he believed, to obstruct the channel whereby the proceedings of Parliament were communicated to the public, as any man in the Commons' House, or in the country. What he complained of in the present instance was, a wilful and malicious misrepresentation of what he said. In that view of the matter he knew he had a right to the protection of that House. He had no wish that the gallery should be shut, or that strangers should be excluded ; on the contrary, he was desirous that all possible indulgence should be shewn towards strangers, because he was aware the public were benefited by their admission ; but he trusted that such an indulgence should not be perverted to calumniate the Members of the House. He was entitled to call on the Attorney General to prosecute the author of this gross and malicious libel, or to move that the publisher of it should appear at the bar of that House to answer for such a publication. Those who knew him would, he believed, allow there was not much of malice in his composition : he desired only the common right of a Member of the House to address the Speaker when he thought an occasion called for it, without being wilfully and maliciously misrepresented. He had been so in the paper to which he had alluded. He had the paper in his pocket ; but he should be ashamed to read it. If any gentleman would read it, he would, he believed, agree with him, it contained the most illiberal reflections, the most gross and vulgar malice, that ever was pub-

lished against any individual. He had no malice against the author, nor did he know any reason why the author, whoever he was, should have any malice against him. His principal intention was to point the censure of the House against such shameful abuses, and to claim their protection against any attempt thus industriously and deliberately to throw discredit on an individual.

The Right Honourable General FITZPATRICK. The French Revolution is an event of such prodigious magnitude, that there is no circumstance, either immediately or remotely, connected with it, which does not, in some degree, affect the interests and policy of all other nations; more especially of such as have, in consequence of it, found themselves engaged in war. According to my conceptions, therefore, the subject which it is my present purpose to bring under the deliberation of the House, cannot be considered as foreign to the jurisdiction or cognizance of the British Parliament.

It is now near three years since, in the last House of Commons, I moved to address His Majesty to beseech his gracious interposition with a power, then an ally of this country, to obtain some mitigation of the unjust and cruel treatment of certain distinguished members of the French Constituent Assembly, whom, not the chance of war, but the eventful circumstances of the times had thrown into the hands of the powers then leagued in a war against their country—I mean General La Fayette, together with two other respectable persons, at that time languishing in the prisons of our ally, the King of Prussia, and now, as I am well informed, experiencing a fate still more rigorous, in the dungeons of another of our allies, the Emperor of Germany. Having upon that occasion thought it necessary to enter, at some length, into a detail of the conduct of the unfortunate persons concerned, I shall spare the House the trouble of hearing any repetition of those particulars; contenting myself with remarking, that among such as have been able to preserve their minds free from the contagion of violence and prejudice which has too generally prevailed, and have looked at the Revolution, in its commencement or its progress, with any thing of a dispassionate view, there have not been found any reasons for withholding from these persons the full credit of purity and rectitude of intention. I urged the House to the adoption of that motion upon the joint ground of policy and humanity. The circumstance of our having now relinquished all hopes of conciliating a party in France, by some may possibly be thought to have weakened the first of these pleas. Were this so, which I am by no means inclined to admit, the time which has elapsed, and the aggravated hardships of the unhappy sufferers, must be allowed proportionably to have added

strength to the latter. But I have said, that I by no means admit the first of these pleas to be weakened, because in a moment when questions of the highest political nature are, from the circumstances of the times, occupying the public mind of every civilized nation, I consider it to be a most injudicious and fatal policy for themselves, for those who are desirous of creating a preponderance of opinion in favour of monarchical forms, to exhibit to the world a flagrant instance of barbarity and oppression, which cannot fail to excite in the minds of all men an indisposition towards those governments under whose authority it is exercised.

I recollect, that an ingenious and honourable friend of mine (Mr. Sheridan), in the last Parliament, when he was drawing a striking and melancholy picture of the supposed declining state of this country, observed, that one remarkable circumstance seemed to distinguish it from all examples afforded by history of countries in a similar situation: this circumstance he stated to be, that although there appeared a total deficiency and decay of all public virtue, the private virtue of the nation had been at no period more conspicuous. I must acknowledge, that the grounds upon which my honourable friend founded this latter part of his opinion did not immediately suggest themselves to my mind; but, without coinciding altogether with the opinion, I could not but observe, that the fate of the motion I am this day renewing, afforded a striking illustration of the justice of it. When the subject I am now speaking of was first mentioned within these walls, the humane feelings of every individual seemed to sympathize in an universal abhorrence of such detestable tyranny. But when, encouraged by these promising appearances, I brought forward a proposition with a view of giving effect to these benevolent sensations, no sooner did the Minister step forward in opposition to it, than the voice of private virtue, but a few days before so audible, was hushed into a total silence; and the motion was negatived by a considerable majority; among whom must have been many, who, in their individual capacities, had expressed their disapprobation of that oppression which, in their public character, they did not hesitate to countenance by their votes.

In the grounds of his opposition to that motion, the Minister did not attempt to defend, or even palliate the enormity which he was sensible so many of his supporters shrunk back from the contemplation of with horror. There was but one Member (Mr. Burke) in the House who ventured to go that length: and the splendid abilities of that Member were, at that time, exerted in support of so many wild and eccentric doctrines, doctrines at this day abandoned, and which ought to be looked back to with regret and contrition by

those who encouraged them, that one may not unreasonably indulge a hope that this may prove one of those excesses where his eloquence seduced our predecessors into a conduct we shall not be disposed to imitate. The Minister, however, as I before observed, was too judicious to adopt such a line of opposition. He entered into a defence of the original grounds of the detention of La Fayette, and expatiated upon the impropriety of our interference in what he treated as the concerns of a foreign independent Sovereign. I do not feel it necessary to revive at present the discussion of those points which have been so long before the public; I retain the opinion I then held and supported, that supposing the original arrest, or *temporary* detention, of La Fayette to be justifiable, when once the true condition of himself and his companions had been ascertained, when it appeared that they had not been taken bearing arms against any of the powers at war, nor employed in any function whatsoever by the enemy, that, being neither capable of being considered as prisoners of war, or prisoners of state, their imprisonment became an unwarrantable act of injustice and oppression. With respect to the impropriety of our interference with a foreign power, I trust we shall not hear that argument insisted upon this day. The King of Prussia, previous to his withdrawing from our alliance, determined no longer to continue in the odious character of the common gaoler of the confederacy: he transferred the prisoners to the Emperor of Germany, it is said, with an observation which has been, indeed, but too cruelly verified, that he believed they would not find their condition much benefited by the exchange. Thus do absolute Princes sport with the liberties and sufferings of mankind. Should it be this day urged, that these unhappy men being still the prisoners of a foreign independent Sovereign, our interference upon the subject would be still liable to the same objection, I am prepared to meet such an argument by a direct contradiction of the fact upon which it is founded.

I assert, that General La Fayette and his fellow sufferers, are *not* the prisoners of the Emperor of Germany; and upon what authority do I make this assertion? Upon the most indisputable the case will admit of, upon the authority of the Emperor of Germany himself.

I should here feel myself called upon to request the particular attention of the House, were I not persuaded that the subject is in itself so interesting to every feeling of humanity as to need no effort of mine to impress it more forcibly on the minds of those who hear me. If I am speaking in an assembly of Englishmen, I have no fear that what I am proceeding to state will not sufficiently engage

their attention. The unfortunate person of whom I have been speaking, to compensate, perhaps to enable him to bear the severe lot he has been doomed to suffer, is the husband of a woman, whose name will be revered as long as exalted virtue shall command respect, or unmerited affliction shall inspire compassion in the breasts of men—a woman, exhibiting in these days the example of another Arria, devoting herself to a voluntary participation of all the rigors, barbarities, and oppressions, a Claudius or a Nero can inflict upon her persecuted husband. It has been said, that the age of chivalry is gone, that all respect and loyalty to sex have been obliterated in these times. Never will I suffer to escape my lips a word which may be construed into a reflection upon the memory of the unfortunate Princess, whose persecutions gave occasion to the observation: but surely his mind must be singularly framed, his eyes must be strangely dazzled by the splendor of superior rank and elevated station, who can so feelingly deplore the undeserved sufferings of the ill-fated Queen of France, yet contemplate without pity the afflictions, surely no less undeserved, of the unhappy wife of La Fayette.

This admirable pattern of female heroism and virtue, providentially escaped from the fangs of the relentless Robespierre, (for it is the glory of her husband to have been equally an object of hatred to tyrants of all descriptions,) had seen her mother, her sister, together with all her nearest and dearest relations, dragged to a miserable death upon a scaffold, on which, during a whole year, she had been in the daily expectation of ending her own melancholy existence. She availed herself of the liberty the fall of her persecutor restored to her, to fly from the prisons of anarchical tyranny to the succour of her husband languishing in the dungeons of, what is called, a regular and legitimate government. She had the good fortune (for without some dexterity and contrivance it could not have happened) to obtain an audience of the Emperor at Vienna, together with her two daughters, the eldest not yet seventeen years of age—she threw herself at his feet imploring his clemency for her unfortunate husband:—but if his liberty was too great a favour to be hoped for, soliciting, at least, that his family might, by partaking, be permitted to alleviate the misery of his imprisonment, and suffered in the melancholy gloom of his dungeon to administer those endearing consolations of conjugal affection and filial duty, which, under the most bitter afflictions, might sustain the fortitude of a husband and a father. The House will readily believe, that the person to whom these supplications were addressed could not listen to them without emotion. The present Emperor has not

reached a time of life, he has not been long enough either in the world, or upon a throne, to have acquired that callous insensibility which too frequently is found to harden the hearts of those by whom the councils of Sovereigns are directed. He received her solicitations with kindness and indulgence ; he applauded and expressed his admiration of the generosity of her conduct. To the request of joining her husband in his prison, he immediately acceded ; but with respect to the more material subject of her intreaties, he used these remarkable expressions : *With respect to his liberty, it is a complicated affair, upon which my hands are bound.*

Of the truth of this declaration of the Emperor having been conveyed in these words, I hold in my hand, and am ready to produce, the incontrovertible testimony of the interesting person to whom they were spoken. This fact, thus authenticated, I defy His Majesty's Ministers to contradict ; and upon this fact I appeal to the House, whether I am not warranted in the assertion I have made, that La Fayette is *not* the prisoner of the Emperor of Germany. Before I state what strikes me as the irresistible inference from this fact, perhaps the House may be desirous of learning the sequel of the melancholy tale I have been relating. This incomparable woman, having thus obtained the Emperor's consent to be admitted into the prison of her husband, hastened to Olmutz, the place of his confinement. It should seem that the favour she had obtained was, by some persons of authority in the Imperial Court, considered as too great an indulgence to have been granted : for, upon her arrival, no means were left unattempted to dissuade her from the execution of her virtuous purpose. An officer preposed to the immediate guard of the dungeons, acquainted her that her husband, having attempted his escape, was subjected to the utmost rigor which the severe regulations of these prisons prescribed ; that before she took the final resolution of immuring herself with him, it was just to apprize her that she could not be exempted from them. These menaces were not capable of shaking the firmness of a mind like hers : but it is truly painfully to relate, that these menaces have been carried into the strictest execution. What a scene must the re-union of this unhappy family have presented in the circumstances under which they met ! In her interview with the Emperor he had assured her, that she would find her husband treated with lenity and indulgence. It is melancholy to reflect, that Monarchs, in absolute governments, should so often be made the instruments of oppressions of what they are themselves unconscious ! Having received these assurances, what must have been her feelings when she found her husband sinking under the aggravated severities

of his imprisonment! Emaciated, debarred the sight of every human being, except his merciless gaolers, deprived of the benefit of fresh air, though labouring under a pulmonary complaint, which made it peculiarly necessary for him! When she learned, that the first change of raiment he had been allowed, was in consequence of her arrival, when the tattered rags, which scarcely covered his body, had been exchanged for a garb of the coarsest materials; an indulgence, however, not given without the insult of informing him, that the coarsest materials had been purposely sought, as such alone he was worthy to be clothed with. For the treatment she herself was to expect, what must have been her sensations, when her request, that herself and her daughters might be allowed the services of an attendant of their own sex, was peremptorily refused! By the rigid laws of the prison, strictly enforced, it is only during day-light that any prisoners are permitted to be absent from their respective cells; consequently, during these dreary winter months, their innocent and unoffending daughters, by a solitary confinement of sixteen hours, in their own dungeon, purchase the permission of devoting the remaining eight to the duty of consoling their unhappy parents. It may, perhaps, be thought, I know, indeed, it has been said, that these are exaggerations unworthy of credit: that such enormities should appear incredible, I am not surprized; but that they are literally true, I have, from evidence incontrovertible, the fullest conviction. But why should we disbelieve these instances of barbarity, when they are equalled, if not surpassed, by others, of which the public is in possession of authentic proof? Whatever trials the fortitude of a female mind may resist, the delicacy of a female frame is not formed to encounter so rude a treatment; accordingly we find, that the health of this unfortunate lady has suffered under it severely. For the benefit of medical advice and assistance, she petitioned to be allowed, for a short time, to repair to Vienna. What a refinement of cruelty, what a savage delight in accumulating afflictions upon an afflicted mind, does the answer to her request exhibit! After a solicitation of three months this answer was procured, and delivered to her by the Governor of the fortress: "That his Imperial Majesty had been pleased to determine, that, on no consideration whatever, she should be permitted to go to Vienna; but that she might quit the prison, on condition of never returning to it." The permission to go to Vienna, where possibly another interview with the Emperor might have opened the eyes of this unfortunate Prince to the enormities of which his Ministers made him the instrument, was, at any rate, to be guarded against; but the request to quit the prison for medical

assistance was acquiesced in. Observe, however, the inhuman, the *diabolical* condition annexed to it: “*Yes*; you may quit the prison of your husband to seek medical advice; but *mark*, it is to return no more: you have sacrificed your health to obtain the society of your husband; you shall now sacrifice the society of your husband to obtain the recovery of your health.” There is really an ingenuity of conception in this refinement of barbarity which seems to disgrace the genius of the dramatic poets of all ages who have endeavoured to paint tyranny in its most odious and detestable colours.

I will now read to the House the patient, calm, and affecting reply of the unhappy sufferer to this savage insult, upon the best and tenderest feelings of which the human heart is capable:

Letter of Madame de la Fayette.

“The Commandant of Olmutz informed me yesterday, that, in answer to my request of being allowed to go for eight days to Vienna for the purpose of consulting the faculty, his Imperial Majesty signified, that on no consideration whatever I am to be permitted to visit that capital; and that he will consent to my quitting this prison only on condition of never entering it more. I have the honour to reiterate the answer which I made to the Commandant. To solicit the assistance which the state of my health requires, is a duty which I owed my family and my friends; but they are sensible that it is not possible for me to purchase it at the price at which it is offered. I cannot forget, that while we were both on the point of perishing—me, by the tyranny of Robespierre; M. de la Fayette, by the moral and physical sufferings of his captivity—that I was not allowed to obtain any account of him, or to inform him that his children and myself were yet in existence; and nothing shall tempt me to expose myself a second time to the horrors of such a separation. Whatever, then, may be the state of my health, or the inconveniences which may result to myself and my daughters from this habitation, we will all three avail ourselves with gratitude of the goodness of his Imperial Majesty, who permits us to share his captivity in all its details.”

This letter, the authenticity of which cannot be questioned, reveals to us another instance of atrocious cruelty to which she had been exposed. She cannot forget, that while they were on the point of perishing in their respective dungeons, she had not been allowed to obtain any account of him, or to inform him that his

children or herself were yet in existence. Why, let me ask, are the circumstances I have related to be supposed exaggerated states of barbarity, when such barbarities as these are in proof before us? With a sorrow, which I am certain all who hear me will partake, I have to inform the House, that in this alarming state of health, she has been to this hour suffered to languish in a prison, which, there is too much reason to apprehend, will shortly become the tomb of so much virtue. Among all the horrible crimes to which the French Revolution has, in its progress, given birth, those who love to contemplate human nature in its more favourable points of view, will derive some consolation to their wounded feelings from its having given occasion to the display of such exemplary virtue. Those who consider religion as the best and surest foundation of all virtue, will learn with satisfaction, that until her misfortunes gave scope to the exertion of the great qualities of her mind, the eminent piety of this lady had been the most distinguishing feature of her character. But what will those friends of religion think, when they are told that, by those governments who have hypocritically affected to be waging war in the cause of religion itself, that piety, by which she was distinguished, has been converted into an additional instrument of torture! By the tenets of the Roman Catholic persuasion, we know how very strictly the duties of confession and of hearing mass are enjoined. If, in the poignancy of her afflictions, the accumulated injuries of her oppressors could be supposed, in a mind of such angelic purity, to have excited a momentary emotion of resentment, and have disturbed the meek tranquillity of Christian resignation, it is a torment to her conscience not to be suffered, in the acknowledgement of it, to fulfil that duty which her religion has prescribed. The opportunity of fulfilling these duties, by sincere and devout Roman Catholics, considered as sacred and indispensable, have, by a Government pretending to be fighting the cause of that very religion, been absolutely refused to her repeated and pressing solicitations.

The House is probably impatient to be relieved from the detail of such distressing circumstances. Many more have come to my knowledge, which the delicacy of disclosing the means by which they have transpired, prevent my touching upon. I am aware, that by some the agitation of this subject is considered as more injurious than beneficial to the unfortunate persons it relates to. Any anonymous observations of that nature, I should think unworthy of notice. But since I gave notice of this motion, a paper has been put into my hands, where, I confess, it was with concern I found a writer of eminence and ability adopting this language.

Whoever has read much of what has been written during the course of the Revolution, must be acquainted with the various publications of M. Mallet du Pan. In a letter, addressed to the editor of a Paris Journal, I find him positively contradicting a statement which that editor had made of the ill treatment of the prisoners of Olmutz, telling him, that by the representation he has given of it he has made himself *the Echo of Imposture*. From what sources M. Mallet du Pan has drawn his information, I do not know: in his contradiction of the rigorous treatment of the prisoners of Olmutz, from the respectable character he bears, I hope, and am willing to believe, that he is himself *only the Echo of Imposture*. Those, however, who have been conversant with his former writings, will certainly observe that he has, in this instance, adopted somewhat of a more courtly strain than is perfectly consistent with the liberal principles of rational liberty, of which he has usually professed himself the advocate. He declares, that, in common with the rest of the world, he laments the fate of these unhappy prisoners: he declares himself likewise perfectly ignorant with respect to the causes of their confinement. This ignorance he considers as imposing a duty upon all prudent men of an entire silence upon the subject, and recommends it to their friends to endeavour, by all the means in their power, that these unhappy persons should be wholly forgotten till history shall have removed the veil which at present covers this mysterious business. His indignation is without bounds, when he finds this journalist holding forth to Europe, under the colours of a Caligula, a Monarch, of all others, the most distinguished for clemency; yet he tells us, that this Monarch holds in his prisons, neither he nor any one else can conjecture wherefore, a person to whose character he himself affixes the epithets *estimable* and *irreproachable*. M. Mallet du Pan must produce other instances of clemency, I believe, before he persuades Europe to substitute the name of Titus to that of Caligula in behalf of the object of his panegyric. This writer certainly does little honour to the government he undertakes to defend, when he adds, that the friends of La Fayette will produce no other effects, by their complaints, than exciting the powers upon whom his liberation depends, to lengthen his captivity. I will not suppose that, with the rulers of a free country, a remonstrance against oppression will be supposed capable of producing an aggravation of it. So far from entertaining such an opinion, I do not apprehend that I am doing any injury to the cause of La Fayette in this country, when I say that whatever sentiments may be here entertained of the principles he has maintained and acted upon,

I know that he would not to-morrow purchase his liberty by the retraction of any one of them. I will not believe that in this country it will be imputed to him as a crime that he refused the liberty which was offered to him, upon his first arrest, at Namur, upon the condition of betraying the army, of which he had relinquished the command, to the enemy. I will not believe that this country harbours any ill will against a native of France, because he was the original institutor of those national guards which have enabled France to establish her Republic against the united efforts of all Europe; still less will I believe that there can, in any quarter of this country, lurk against him a narrow and vindictive spirit which can be gratified in beholding the friend and pupil of the illustrious Washington perishing in a dungeon upon account of his political principles, even though such principles may have been originally imbibed in supporting the cause of America against Great Britain. If such considerations can stimulate the malignity of vengeance in arbitrary and despotic governments, it becomes us to shew, that, under a free constitution, sentiments more liberal and magnanimous are generated in the human mind.

I owe many apologies to the House for having consumed so much of their time upon a subject, the argument upon which is comprized within so narrow a compass. I revert, therefore, to the declaration of the Emperor, the ground upon which I rest the absolute necessity of taking some step to vindicate the national honour from the obloquy which that declaration has thrown upon it. We are in as full possession of the authenticity of that declaration as the nature of the case can possibly admit. Let any one who opposes this motion, undertake to explain by whom, unless by his allies, *the hands of the Emperor are bound*, upon this subject; and let me ask, if, after this declaration, known and circulated as it is through Europe, these prisoners are suffered still to languish in their present miserable condition, to what member of the alliance will the common voice of all mankind impute the fact? If, as we were eloquently and triumphantly told by Mr. Pitt, every Englishman, from the highest to the lowest, is entitled to his share of the glory of the Archduke Charles's victories, where shall that Englishman shelter himself from an equal share of that disgrace and ignominy, that which an Englishman should feel as the worst of ignominies, which belongs to the perpetrators of cruelty, injustice, and oppression? To free the country from the obloquy of lying under such an imputation, is the object of the motion I shall submit to the House. The moment in which I am speaking is, perhaps, of all others, the most seasonable for a measure of the nature of that

which I propose. We have set on foot a negotiation for peace, on the successful issue of which the wishes of suffering humanity are fixed with anxiety to expectation. In such a moment, is it not to be hoped that the sensations of rancour and animosity, which have but too long filled our bosoms, are at length subsiding into milder and more charitable feelings? Sure I am, that the parties who will be best entitled to credit for their sincerity in wishing a fortunate conclusion to this negotiation, are those who, upon entering into it, give a pledge of their conciliating and pacific disposition, by divesting their minds of those habits of virulence and acrimony which the nature of such a contest has but too fatally given birth to, and fomented among all the parties engaged in it. May I be allowed to suggest, that the act of mercy, humanity, and justice I am now recommending, would, on the part of the allies, be no slight indication of that temper pervading their councils, which is best calculated to promote the attainment of the great object to which the hopes and wishes of all the nations of Europe are, at this moment, so anxiously directed?

Indulging a hope that the House may concur with me in viewing the subject in this light, I move,

“ That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, to represent to His Majesty, that it appears to this House that the detention of General La Fayette, Bureau de Pusy, and Latour Maubourgh, in the prison of His Majesty’s ally, the Emperor of Germany, is highly injurious to his Imperial Majesty, and to the common cause of the allies; and humbly to implore His Majesty to intercede in such manner as to his wisdom shall seem most proper for the deliverance of these unfortunate persons.”

Mr. SHERIDAN. Sir, I rise with the utmost readiness and satisfaction to second the motion, which has just been made. But I will not for a moment prevent you from stating the question to the House, nor will I risque the chance of weakening the impression made upon the understanding and feelings of the House, by adding any thing to what has been so forcibly and eloquently advanced by my honourable friend, till I hear what can possibly be urged in opposition to that irresistible appeal which he has made to the justice and humanity of a British Legislature.

Mr. Chancellor PITT. I readily admit that a more striking and pathetic appeal was never made to the feelings of the House, than in the eloquent speech which introduced the motion of the honourable gentleman. Irresistible, however, as that appeal was, addressed to the sensibility of every individual present, I am aware that this is a question to be decided by the understanding alone, and

therefore cannot decline stating to the House my reasons for negating the motion. It is more particularly incumbent upon me to undertake the task, as the right honourable gentleman in that part of his speech which was the most argumentative, referred particularly to what I had said on a former occasion. The argument, indeed, lies within a narrow compass. I hope I need not declare, that if I were satisfied of the existence of the facts, even to the tenth part of what has been stated by the honourable gentleman, and if it depended upon me to decide whether those facts should continue to exist, I should not for a moment hesitate what course to pursue. I am persuaded, that if the circumstances were such as have been described, and the case of a nature which came within the cognizance of the House, there could not possibly exist the smallest difference of opinion on the subject. But I contend, that however the House may be affected by the representation of facts, which has reached the honourable gentleman, and which I have no doubt he has reason to believe to be true, though I have heard a very opposite statement of the transaction, that the case is one which does not properly call for our interference. The House are in possession of no facts which authorise them to take any decided step on the occasion; there is nothing to satisfy them that the detention of La Fayette is a circumstance at all to be influenced by their authority, or connected with any exertion of their power. However their humanity be interested in the recital, considered as a question of political relations, it is not one which does at all come within their cognizance. But how does the matter stand? The honourable gentleman has quoted a verbal report of a speech of his Imperial Majesty, who is represented as having said, "That the matter did not depend on him; that it was a very complicated affair; that his hands were bound up." He therefore supposes from this declaration of the Emperor, that the detention of La Fayette is an event which depends on the will of His Britannic Majesty, as an ally of that Prince. But upon what ground is such a supposition formed? From whatever motive of duty or obligation the Emperor may have acted in adopting this measure of the detention of La Fayette, by what inference can it be concluded that the King of Great Britain is either complicated in the motive, or a party to the engagement? As to the question of any such engagement, I now declare in the most public, solemn, and explicit manner, that I know of no obligation expressed, implied or understood by His Majesty, as at all connected with the transaction. I know of no communication that has passed on the subject between the Courts of London and Vienna. No opinion has been asked from

this country, nor has any reason been afforded to believe that it was a question on which we could have any influence to decide. It is a transaction in which His Majesty has not had the smallest participation, and with respect to which he can have no right to interfere. As to the colours in which the honourable gentleman has represented that transaction, there can be but one feeling: and to whatever degree the representation may be just, if it was a case in which the House could with propriety interfere, there could be but one sentiment as to the course which ought to be adopted on the present occasion. For my own part, whatever be the ground of his original detention, which I do not now mean to discuss, however justifiable the right which may have been exercised in the first instance, I have no hesitation in saying with respect to him, as with respect to any other individual, that if the severity of his imprisonment is carried to any thing beyond what is necessary for the purpose of safe custody, if it is accompanied with any circumstances of insult, cruelty, and outrage, such a conduct cannot fail to meet the strongest reprehension, and to excite the warmest indignation in every manly and feeling mind. We have no means of judging of the facts; very opposite statements have undoubtedly been submitted to the public. But even after the sympathy which has been produced by the narrative of the honourable mover, I will venture coolly to submit to the judgement of the House, whether we are bound to take upon ourselves the responsibility of any act of cruelty, injustice, or oppression, which may be committed by a power with whom we are upon a footing of amity and alliance? If we admit the principle in one instance, we must equally adopt it in all. We must take up the resolution not to continue in habits of intercourse and friendly communication with any foreign state, while we leave unredressed any act of severity, cruelty, barbarity, and oppression, which we may suppose to be sanctioned by the Government. The honourable gentleman adverted to the sufferings of the partners of La Fayette's captivity, under the tyranny of Robespierre. I need not remind the House how greatly the cruelties exercised towards thousands by that bloody tyrant exceeded those which are represented in this instance as exercised towards one individual; nor were the victims of his oppression of a character less deserving than the object who is now held out to your compassion, many of them, indeed, were persons of the most exalted virtue. But was it ever stated by gentlemen on the other side, that the cruelty of Robespierre was a reason which ought to prevent us from forming any connection with his Government, and entering into habits of friendly intercourse with the French nation? Did not they hold

a directly opposite line of argument? And in replying to their suggestions in favour of immediate negociation, did we ever urge our horror of the person of the tyrant or detestation of his crimes as the reasons why we could not adopt their recommendation? On the contrary, we were most careful to state that the same principle which gave birth to his crimes, also operated in a way which precluded us from any hope of being able to treat with effect. We said, "Show us the security that we may expect from the result of negociation, and we shall then be ready to treat: we shall waive all objections to the character and conduct of the Government, if you shall convince us that these are not connected with circumstances, which operate as a bar to peace." If we saw nothing in the character of that Government to prevent negociation, provided a proper security could have been obtained, can we possibly admit the principle, that in proportion to our connection with a foreign power, we take upon ourselves a responsibility for the separate concerns of the Government, and the particular transactions sanctioned by their authority? Whatever judgement we may entertain with respect to the transaction in question, whether the Ministers of his Imperial Majesty have advised him well or ill; whether they have acted conformably to the law of nations and the rights of war in the detention of M. La Fayette, we are not called to pronounce upon any decision which they have adopted. We have no more right to interfere in this instance than with respect to any other exercise of municipal authority. Are we to make a condition of our connection with any foreign country, that its criminal law shall be equitably and leniently administered; or if justice be perverted from its course, and punishment rigorously enforced, to conceive that the guilt is ours, if we do not interfere with the means of redress? Let us put a stronger case than the present instance. Let us suppose that any body of subjects in Hungary should complain that the rights of the nation were invaded, and the people reduced to a state of the most abject and cruel oppression; would we in consequence of such representation be entitled to interfere in order to vindicate their privileges, and rescue them from the tyranny of the sovereign? But let us bring the case home to ourselves, and ask how this country would feel if any interference were attempted by a foreign power with respect to the proceedings of its Government? I hope that this country never will nor can produce any parallel instance to the transaction in question. But let us for a moment suppose that we were parties to any transaction of such a nature as to excite feelings of compassion, regret, and horror in foreign nations, and to produce from them an interference founded on such senti-

ments; would we conceive them justified to make their feelings the standard of our conduct—to set up their judgement in opposition to our authority, and by their interference control our independence? I will state a strong case. Let us suppose that some country, not a party to the slave trade, should take upon itself to interpose with respect to our conduct in this traffic.—If humanity and justice are abstractly stated as sufficient grounds of interference—here is a trade carried on in opposition to the eternal principles of justice, and accompanied with instances of cruelty and outrage the most shocking to humanity. What instance of individual oppression can be put in competition with the injustice of a traffic which strikes at the root of every moral obligation? What case of private suffering can be brought forward so atrocious in its nature or dreadful in its circumstances? Yet feeling as I do on that subject, and supposing even the Emperor actuated by similar sentiments, would I, or those who think with me on the question, conceive his Imperial Majesty to be justified if he made the suppression of the slave trade a condition of his alliance with us? Would not every man in this House repulse with indignation this interference with our domestic economy, this invasion of the authority of our Government, this insult to our national independence? I will not dwell longer on the subject. No instance of such interference as is now proposed has ever occurred at any former period. No case has been made out, which calls upon the House to interfere, nor could such interference be attempted without establishing a principle of the most unwarrantable tendency; inconsistent with the internal policy and independent rights of foreign states. I cannot, therefore, comply with the invitation, which the honourable gentleman has held out, to interfere in this instance. It would be improper for this House to take any share in a transaction, which in no degree comes within their province, and on which their decision could have no influence. I desire, however, most explicitly to state, that it shall not in future be understood or supposed, that it depends on any determination of this House, or on any right of this country, to prevent the Emperor from prolonging the detention of M. La Fayette.

Mr. FOX. When upon the question to which the attention of the House is now directed, I find on the one side an appeal so forcibly made to humanity, to justice, and to policy, which it is attempted to elude by an elaborate display of sophistry; on the other, I cannot delay one moment to give utterance to the sentiments with which I am impressed. Notwithstanding the disapprobation I feel of the manner in which the right honourable gentleman has argued the subject, I am glad to find one good effect that has arisen

from the discussion ; I rejoice to find that the enormity which my honourable friend so eloquently painted, is at length admitted ; that it is agreed that France in the worst times of the tyranny of Robespierre, that the history of the world cannot produce an instance of injustice, of cruelty, of oppression, more aggravated, though not in the extent, in principle and in the individual application, than the treatment which General La Fayette has experienced from the ally of this country. But the right honourable gentleman doubts the truth of the facts which have been stated. Certainly there is no legal proof, no formal evidence, to substantiate them ; but without any very favourable opinion of the candour of gentlemen upon the other side, a quality which, with regard to myself, I cannot discover in them any extraordinary disposition to practise, I will undertake, if necessary, to furnish such evidence as cannot fail to place the matter beyond dispute, and which they themselves cannot refuse to admit. But is not the circumstance a matter of notoriety ? Is it not true beyond the possibility of contradiction ? Can any degree of doubt be thrown upon the answer which Madame La Fayette received from the Emperor, or the letter in reply to the alternative that was proposed to her application ? Do we not know that a Government embarked in a war in defence of religion, the principles of humanity, and the existence of social order, upon the request of this illustrious Lady, do not merely refuse the favour, but, as my honourable friend so well expressed it, with a diabolical refinement of cruelty and of insult, connected the refusal with an insidious endeavour to tempt her from her honourable and virtuous purpose ? What are the terms which they annex to the indulgence they offer ? You must not come to Vienna ; you may go elsewhere ; but it is upon condition of the desertion of your husband for ever ! The letter which records this insulting, this inhuman proposal, is public ; its authenticity is incontestable. And can we doubt that the Ministers who on this occasion advised the Emperor, who cannot be supposed to have been unacquainted with the true character of this detestable proceeding, to commit an outrage, to disgrace himself by an act of cruelty, never surpassed by the tyranny of Robespierre, are guilty of those other circumstances which have been imputed to them with respect to the detention of La Fayette ? Let us not think to justify the conduct by any doubt of its truth. The facts are such as every man may judge, and the only result of his judgement must be that they are true. But, says the right honourable gentleman, if we interfere upon the present occasion, strong as it is, we violate the general principle that prohibits us to interfere in the internal regulations of independent

states. Has he, however, forgotten the general argument which he has so frequently urged to us upon many important questions? "Is the principle to be admitted with no limitation; can the rule suffer no exception?" The only difference we have had with him is, whether in the cases for which he contended the exception was to be endured? When the power of the Crown is to be increased at the expence of the liberties of the people, when the Constitution is to be infringed, when the privileges of the House are to be disregarded, the right honourable gentleman has no objection to abandon the principle, and to be guided by the exception; and it is only when an illustrious sufferer is to be rescued from the dungeons of despotism; it is only when humanity, when justice, when virtue plead their strongest claims, that general rule cannot, in his estimation, abate the smallest portion of its rigour. If in one instance we admit the exception, here alone he perceives no limits to its application. It is said, that there are no precedents; but I will tell the right honourable gentleman that there are many precedents in the history of Europe, some where such interferences were without effect; others, when they were employed with success. When our Ambassador left Paris at the beginning of the present contest, he left behind him a powerful intercession in favour of the unfortunate King. Is the case of the interference of France, in favour of Asgill, referred to in an eloquent book which every body has read, unknown, and does this form no precedent? I wish to know what there was in the connection of France with America so intimate and so peculiar, that warranted that Court to do with America what we cannot attempt with Austria? Were they more closely united by the nature of their cause, or the circumstances of their alliance, than we to that ally with respect to whom we entertain such scrupulous delicacies? After the glorious share which we were proud to boast in the victories of the Archduke, can we doubt of the intimacy of the relation only where it may promote the cause of humanity and of justice? The words of the Emperor are clear and intelligible: "his hands are tied up; he is bound." Surely this does not mean that the Emperor is bound by any law. Is he so limited in the exercise of his power, especially in the country which is the scene of this atrocity, that he does not possess the authority to liberate a prisoner unjustly detained? Then he must be bound by his allies; he must then be bound by some one of those known powers with whom he is connected. To shew, therefore, that Great Britain is not the power to whom this injustice is to be ascribed, to preserve our honour and our character unfulfilled, I call upon the House to pass a vote that will rescue us from

the imputation of being concerned in so detestable a transaction, and attach the infamy to the party to whom in reality it belongs.

But we are told, you will interfere in the domestic economy and regulations of independent States. I answer, No: this is not a question which affects domestic economy. I see General La Fayette and his unfortunate companions transferred from the prisons of the King of Prussia to the dungeons of the Emperor; and why? but because he was considered to be the prisoner of the allies. I am aware that a cavil may be employed; but surely it cannot be employed with success—that, as General La Fayette was taken prisoner before we engaged in the war, he is the prisoner of those powers only who were then engaged. I hope, however, that such a pitiful cavil will not be urged. The transference of this unfortunate man from his original place of confinement is a complete proof that he was not the prisoner of the King of Prussia, not the prisoner of the Emperor of Germany, but that he was the prisoner of the powers confederated against France. And can this be called an interference in domestic policy? Is General La Fayette the subject of the Emperor; or was he taken up for violating laws which he was bound to obey? No; he was taken as a prisoner of war; and then, of course, he ought to be held as the prisoner of the allies jointly, according to the law of nations. Be it then, that he is to be considered as a prisoner of war (though even this is a point which may admit of dispute); it is a common custom to allow to such their liberty upon their parole, and upon condition that they shall not again serve during the war. But was any such proposal made to La Fayette? No: with that diabolical malice which prompted the Ministers of the Emperor to tempt the wife of this illustrious sufferer to depart from the magnanimous purpose she had formed of succouring her oppressed husband, they in vain attempted to seduce the gallant La Fayette to renounce that bright reputation he has so nobly acquired, to tarnish those laurels with which he is decked, to sacrifice that proud and dignified character that will flourish in the annals of the world, and live in the estimation of posterity, when Kings and the Crowns they wear are mouldering in the dust. They put to him the question, “Will you give a sanction to those who disapprove the Constitution, and take up arms to destroy it?” His negative was decided. La Fayette, while he disapproved the measures by which he was driven from his country, felt a magnanimity that did not permit him to promote the designs of those who were confederated against it; nor would he violate, by a treacherous act, that duty and that affection which he still felt for his country. I hope and trust, therefore, that the

House will feel that La Fayette was detained, not as a subject of the Emperor upon a criminal charge, but that he was confined as a prisoner of war, and not as a prisoner of the Emperor, but as a prisoner of the allies.

Shall I be told by the right honourable gentleman that there is no connection between the infamy of so base an injustice as this, and the very success with which a common cause is pursued? Suppose that, at the period when this country was at peace with France, when her internal situation was such as would not have induced the right honourable gentleman to interfere, had he been united with her by treaties, and about to act with her as an ally in defence of religion, of humanity, and of social order, would he not have said to her rulers, the object of the confederacy cannot be pursued with success, unless you remove the scandal and the disgrace which your internal proceedings must occasion? Conceive, too, that, at the period when the restoration of monarchy in France, and such an idea was certainly acted upon to a certain degree at least, the Emperor of Germany had thrown into prison the Count of Provence, who now claims the Crown, would it have been possible to have prosecuted the war with any appearance of propriety without obtaining his liberation? Would we not have interceded in his favour to avoid the appearance of so glaring an inconsistency? Where is the difference, I would ask, between this and the present case? When a war is pretended to be undertaken to defend religion, justice, and social order, is it possible, while such unheard-of cruelty exists, while it is perpetrated by one of the allies, co-operating for those objects, and exercised towards the person of a warm friend to limited monarchy, a martyr to that cause and to his principles, that those objects can be prosecuted with success, that the confederates can merit any confidence in their sincerity? It is not enough to vindicate the honour of this country from the partnership of so vile a transaction, that we are told by the right honourable gentleman that Great Britain is perfectly free from any part of the blame. We ought not to be contented with so unsatisfactory a declaration upon so nice and delicate a subject. We should declare, not by a ministerial assertion, but by that intercession we ought to make with our ally, that we are wholly unconcerned; and that so far as lies in our power, we have done every thing to vindicate ourselves from the infamy, and to remedy the injustice. Is it contrary to the rights of independent states, and the usage of nations, to intercede with an ally in the cause of humanity? Many instances have occurred when this intercession has been made with success, and none is to be found where it gave offence. But when we reflect upon

the nature of the alliance which subsists between this country and Austria, the loans which from year to year the Emperor has received, the peculiar alacrity, and the extraordinary zeal with which Ministers have stepped forward to supply his necessities, must not every man acknowledge that here, if in any case, there is as little room for scruple as there would be ground for offence? Here, without arrogant presumption or rash interference, we might recommend to our ally to forbear a conduct that throws a stigma upon the cause we maintain, and reflects odium upon the parties by whom the injustice is perpetrated. Till this be done in an open and unequivocal manner, I must believe that the Emperor is really bound, and that he is prevented from pursuing his inclinations by some ally, by whom he is in a situation to be controlled.

The right honourable gentleman adduced a very singular instance to support his argument against interference upon the present occasion. I am sure he will do me the justice to think that I do not look upon the slave trade with more favourable eye than himself. He has stated justly, and strongly, that few instances of the most undisguised injustice, of the most aggravated enormity and accumulated horror, which blot the history of mankind, can be compared with this abominable traffic. The right honourable gentleman, however, will agree, that for several years, the greater number of his colleagues in office, by their speeches, by their talents, and much more by their influence, have been guilty of prolonging this system of injustice and of guilt. The right honourable gentleman has all this while set passive under the infamy which he must conceive to accrue to his colleagues from the defence of a cause so detestable, without an attempt at intercession to accelerate the overthrow of such injustice, and to vindicate the purity of his Administration. He may, therefore, fairly say, in justification of his present conduct, and in support of his present argument: If I cannot intercede in so honourable a cause with my friends so near me, how can I be expected to intercede with the Emperor of Germany in favour of the illustrious and unfortunate La Fayette? If I had the right, as I have not, of advising the right honourable gentleman in private, I should recommend to him to employ, in the case of the slave trade, with his friends and colleagues in office, the weight which his intercession doubtless would carry along with it; but in his public character I have the right; and I call upon him, if he feels that warmth of humanity which some parts of his speech seemed to imply, to vindicate his sincerity by an intercession in favour of the prisoners of Olmutz, and at once to assert the cause of humanity and protect the honour of his country,

The right honourable gentleman says, that, to adopt such a precedent, would be to make us parties in every internal transaction of our allies to which any objection could be formed. The right honourable gentleman tells us sometimes, that it is a false mode of reasoning to argue from the rule against the exception, and from the policy of the little to the policy of the great; and I certainly do not feel myself disposed to controvert the general truth of the observations; but the present is a case of mercy, that mercy which itself is only an exception to the grand principle of justice, and held no less dignified in its nature, and no less honourable in its practice. Why then does the right honourable gentleman stand so high upon the principle? Why does he refuse to admit the limitation in an instance so glorious and so ennobling? Why will he refuse to deviate from the rule to form the splendid exception, at once to reflect dignity upon the principle, and to support the cause of humanity in its operation? While the right honourable gentleman has thus yielded to his cold feelings, to the unsympathising severity of his judgement and his reason; while, by the frigid dictates of his understanding, he induced the House to resist a similar motion of my honourable friend upon a former occasion, the unhappy effects are to be seen in the increased miseries and aggravated oppression of the victims we deplore. The right honourable gentleman professes to have admired the exalted virtues and the heroic magnanimity of the unfortunate wife of General La Fayette; but so much is the spirit of chivalry decayed, that he willingly allows her to moulder without resource in the dismal recesses of a dungeon. Much as he admires this Lady's conduct, she is to be little benefited by this admiration; much as her situation excited his sympathy, he will make no effort for her deliverance; till the wasting progress of her sufferings at last finally put a period to her distress, and close her eyes to those calamities which she sacrificed her life to share and to alleviate. If the people of this country must exult in the victories of Prince Charles, and participate in their glory, will they not feel with equal transport the triumph of relieving the unfortunate? There is one circumstance which I cannot help observing; I have often been accused by the right honourable gentleman, because I have expressed myself freely in praise of those traits of gallantry, which the conduct of the enemy has displayed. But the Archduke Charles, possessing those qualities which are the usual companions of bravery, feels and does justice to the merit of an enemy. The dead body of a French General (Marceau), which had fallen into his power, he restores to his companions, and pays to his funeral those last honours that are due to bravery. Had this

generous Prince the disposal of La Fayette, who could doubt of the conduct he would pursue? Capable of appreciating the merit even of an enemy, the same disposition that induced him to render justice to the merit of Marceau, would lead him to esteem the qualities of La Fayette. If we may judge of the court of Vienna, from the character of this Prince, the Emperor must be bound up from following his own inclination. If we are to fix the blame upon any particular quarter, we should rather suspect of prolonging the misery and oppression of La Fayette, those individuals who have reviled all Frenchmen, who have at all been connected with the Revolution, than those who have shewn themselves capable of allowing them the merit they deserve. The Emperor is young in years, and in command; we all know how easy it is in Courts to conceal the truth, and to communicate to His Majesty the impression that is desired. Madame La Fayette asks leave to come to Vienna to obtain a consultation concerning the deplorable state of her health. She gains permission to leave her prison upon conditions with which she cannot comply. Yet these Ministers, in their low and grovelling minds, seemed to be afraid that they had granted too much. They dreaded that she might come to Vienna, and disclose the horrid scene of iniquity with which the Emperor was unacquainted. They then say, you may go to Hungary, to Bohemia, or any where else you please, except Vienna; there you are not to come. Was it from any apprehension that she who had spent so much of the last part of her life in the dungeons of anarchy and of despotism—the who distinguished herself by her pious conduct, her domestic temper, her mild and gentle virtues, was there to prove dangerous by her intrigues? No; they feared that she might obtain an audience of the Emperor, and display such a picture of her husband's sufferings and her own, as would strike his mind with indignation and horror. It is true, that these events to a certain extent are public; that even the debates of this House may be known at Vienna. But still such matters as this are carefully, and often successfully, concealed from the knowledge of Princes. This will hardly be thought possible to those who judge only by what they see in this country. What happened to the King of Spain, however, may prove true of the Emperor of Germany. During the whole course of the war with Spain, his Catholic Majesty was told, and had believed, that his troops were always victorious, and, to his astonishment, the first account he received of disaster was, when his Ministers, frightened into peace, informed him of the defeat of his army, and advised him to put an end to the war on any terms. I am convinced, it is impossible to believe any thing else, than that the

Emperor has been cruelly, most cruelly deceived — deceived in a point by which his honour is so severely wounded, his character so deeply disgraced. How, then, is the fame of the Emperor to be cleared, and his reputation to be retrieved? How is he at length to be enabled to do away the injustice, the barbarous, unfeeling oppression, which so long has been practised by an abuse of his authority? Suppose my honourable friend should be sent to Vienna for this object, and however unwilling to connect himself with the present Ministers, I am sure in so benevolent a mission as this, he would not refuse to engage; would he possess the means of explaining to the Emperor the cruelties which his Ministers had inflicted? No. This could only be done by a communication between equals. Let the King of Great Britain intimate to the Emperor, by direct communication, the true situation of the case, and the real sentiment of the British nation coming from an equal authority, cannot fail of success. It will not only serve the cause of justice and of humanity, and afford to the Emperor shelter from the imputation of the horrors which have been committed under his authority, and rescue his name from being transmitted to posterity polluted with the guilt of so detestable an outrage, loaded with the infamy of such lengthened oppression. I call upon this House to interpose its authority that this foul fact may be cleared up. I am sure I should sooner trust, on such an occasion as this, the benevolent feelings of the House, than the frigid reasons which the right honourable gentleman recommended us to exercise. After the progress they have seen of the unfortunate La Fayette from the prisons of the King of Prussia to the dungeons of the Emperor, when they see that he is the prisoner of the allies, not the subject of the House of Austria, they will judge whether intercession in his favour would be either an infringement of the rights of independent states, or an interference with their domestic and municipal policy. In a war which is said to have been undertaken in the cause of humanity and of justice, will the House look to the treatment of General La Fayette without emotions of sympathy, or turn from his sufferings without feelings of execration? If they refuse to yield to those natural and generous sentiments which his history and his misfortunes are calculated to inspire, they are callous to every feeling which can dignify and adorn the human character. If they refuse to give the support to a motion that recommends the intercession of this country, for the purpose of putting a period to misery, already too long protracted, a measure that violates none of the rights of independent states, which even is connected with the future success of the war, if its continuation should prove necessary, they will be insensible to every

honourable feeling, and to every generous principle of action. Surely such an appeal as this, I cannot make to the House in vain ; it must awaken every sentiment of that humanity which is so characteristic of Britons. At a period, too, when a willingness displays itself to forget that animosity which so long prevailed between this country and France, when those most distinguished for their asperity are desirous of cultivating a better understanding, surely we ought to divest ourselves of rancour against those by whom it is least of all deserved. To La Fayette can be imputed none of the horrors which have disgraced the scenes of the Revolution in France. By almost all (I know there are a few who think otherwise) he is admitted to have been well intentioned—he acted only in the first times of the Revolution ; he participated in none of the atrocities which succeeded. True to the principles he professed, he sacrificed to the sacred impulse of duty every thing which was dear to his heart. Surely the sufferings he has undergone, the unmerited persecution he has suffered, his constancy, his courage, and his virtue, form claims which appeal equally to the calm dictates of reason, and the warm feelings of humanity. I sincerely hope that the House will do themselves the honour to sanction so virtuous a cause. If the Minister should show himself dead to all the sentiments of humanity, and to the glory of the country, I hope the House will feel with their constituents, and rescue from oppression a person so long the sport of adversity, and the victim of despotism.

Mr. W. SMITH spoke in favour of the motion. He said, it had been rumoured that there was a possibility M. Fayette had been confined in this rigorous manner by the Emperor at the request of the Princes of the Blood, the brothers of the French King ; if so, and Government chose to interfere, he had not a doubt but, on their intimation of a wish of that kind to the Count d'Artois, he might, and would be induced to relinquish his claim on the Emperor's promise of such confinement. The motion did not, he said, require the House to stop supplies to the Emperor till the request was granted ; it only requested the House to use its interference, in order to prevail on His Majesty to intercede with the Emperor in behalf of this unfortunate General. The House might very well do this. Neither the Crown nor the Government could be degraded by an act of mercy ; and if the House agreed to the motion, the universal voice of the people of Great Britain must sanction and applaud their decision.

Mr. MARTIN trusted, that the motion would not be resisted. It peculiarly called on the humanity of the House ; and he observed

with satisfaction; that a great many Members returned in the present Parliament were young men, from whose feelings a decision that would do honour to them might be justly expected.

Mr. HAWKINS BROWNE observed; that the question before the House ought to be decided on the simple ground of its own merits, without any reference whatever to the feelings of gentlemen. It was necessary to take it into consideration in a dispassionate manner, otherwise it might with propriety be argued, that a determination, influenced by the passion, could not be of a very justifiable nature. He viewed, for his own part, the motion in a different point of view; and he could not help thinking, that it was objectionable on many solid grounds, but particularly as it positively stated facts which did not come in an authentic state before the House.

Mr. Chancellor PITT rose to explain. He declared, that what he had stated on a former occasion directly and positively was, that Government had no participation whatever in the measure which was the object of the motion, and that consequently it could not of itself effect the release of the prisoners detained by the Emperor. There was not the slightest foundation for insinuating that Government was any way concerned in it.

Mr. GREY said, that it was impossible for any man to hear the narrative of the sufferings of General La Fayette without the most acute feelings of compassion for him and the unfortunate partners of his misery. It was a cause in which it would have well become the government of a great nation to interfere without any application. But when he heard it stated that such interference would be inconsistent with the relation in which we stand to the internal police of the Government of the House of Austria, he hoped that the House of Commons, as the only remaining resource, would positively direct the application to be made. He felt it unnecessary to go much at length into the subject, after the eloquent and pathetic appeal which had been made to the House by his honourable friend (General Fitzpatrick); and he considered it as a happy omen of the success of his motion, that not one individual had come forward to oppose it, excepting the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt). One honourable gentleman had, indeed, shewed some disposition to rise, but he supposed that his hands were bound, and that he would not renew his attempt. There was only one point on which he wished to say a few words. The right honourable gentleman had alluded to the state of the present negotiation between this country and France; and in this view he was of opinion that it would be extremely political in this country, now

that the Government had renounced every idea of interfering in the internal affairs of France; to shew by a public act that it took no part in punishing any man who had been distinguished in the course of the Revolution. It had been stated, that this was a case in which it was beyond the competence of the Government of this country to interfere; but he contended the fact from which this inference was drawn to have been misstated. La Fayette was not detained as a prisoner of war, but he was confined for something that he had done since the Revolution by an operation, as had been stated, of Municipal law. The best mode, therefore, of removing all the jealousies which might still subsist between the negotiating powers was, to cease to persecute any person who had acted in that Revolution against which the war was undertaken. He earnestly hoped, therefore, that either the British Government would intercede with the Court of Vienna in behalf of these unfortunate captives, or that the Government of France would stipulate for their release as an article of the treaty.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that the honourable gentleman having thought proper to impute to him a statement, that the confinement of Monsieur La Fayette was to be referred to the operation of the Municipal law, it was necessary for him to deny expressly such an imputation. He had merely stated the imprisonment of that gentleman as the act of the Emperor, as a separate transaction, in which that Prince was alone implicated, and for which the other members of the alliance were not answerable.

Mr. WILBERFORCE accused the other side of the House of wishing, what they had no right to do, to make a monopoly of feeling, and to suppose that Ministers were entirely destitute of those sentiments of compassion which he believed to be common to them with every Member of the House. He professed to entertain an opinion somewhat different from any that had been hitherto expressed. He could not agree with the motion in its present form, because he did not think that the facts stated were sufficiently ascertained, and because he was not sure that the circumstance of La Fayette's confinement had been prejudicial to the cause of His Majesty and his allies; nor, on the other hand, did he think it to be a cause in which it was improper for the House of Commons to interfere. He was confident, that if suspicion was before entertained that the Government of this country was concerned in his confinement, that such a suspicion could not exist after what had fallen from his right honourable friend. He conceived, however, that it was the duty of a great and respectable assembly, to look abroad into the world, and to attend to the wants and claims of misery,

wherever objects of distress were to be found, and to exercise its influence, or its power, in relieving the distress of suffering humanity upon an enlarged and disinterested scale. Though he could not vote for the motion, therefore, in its present form, he would have no objection to an amendment, merely submitting to His Majesty the propriety of using his influence with the Court of Vienna for the liberation of the Marquis La Fayette.

General FITZPATRICK said, he was desirous to meet the honourable gentleman's ideas by coinciding in his proposition, as it would tend to reconcile the general opinion on the measure. With respect to the honourable gentleman's doubts as to the certainty of the facts alluded to, he could assure him, that he could, if it were thought necessary, furnish, from his private information, such proofs as would place these facts beyond contradiction.

Mr. WILBERFORCE moved as an amendment, that in the room of the words of the original motion, be substituted the following:

“ That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, hum-
“ bly to submit to His Majesty the propriety of His Majesty's
“ using his good offices with his ally the Emperor of Germany, for
“ the liberation of the General La Fayette, and Messieurs La
“ Tour Maubourg, and Bureau de Pusy.”

The amendment being regularly proposed, and the question being put upon it,

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS disapproved of the amendment, because, when the first words of the motion of the honourable gentlemen were left out, the spirit of the motion was lost. He conceived the motion to have been made on the supposition, that His Britannic Majesty was concerned in the detention of General La Fayette, by his ally the Emperor. And now that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had disavowed having any concern in the matter, he neither could see the propriety of the motion nor of the amendment.

Lord HAWKESBURY was averse to both the original motion and amendment, though in the choice of the alternative he would rather vote for the latter. When the late unfortunate royal family of France were in the depth of their misfortunes, he recollected that there was a discussion in the House of Commons, respecting the propriety of adopting some measures in their behalf. The debate was adjourned to the following day; and he remembered, that the right honourable gentleman opposite to him (Mr. Fox) stated, that he would not give his assent to any address to His Majesty upon the subject, because he was not prepared to take any

step in consequence ; by which he understood him to mean what he was not prepared, if the measures should prove ineffectual, to agree to go to war. Now he would ask, in the present instance, if the Government should intercede with the Court of Vienna in behalf of General La Fayette, whether the House were prepared to break their alliance with Austria in case of the failure of that intercession ? The precedents which had been quoted did not apply to the present case. In the instance of Captain Apgill, the application was made, not by the Court, but personally by the Queen of France. There was, in his opinion, only one ground on which the House would be justified in interfering, namely, if the conduct of the Court of Vienna was notoriously unjust and iniquitous. But of this, on the present occasion, the House of Commons were not proper judges ; for, in the first place, they had no authentic statement of facts before them ; and in the next place, even though they were in possession of the facts, it would be unjust to pass a decision till the Court of Vienna was heard in its own defence.

Mr. SHERIDAN observed, that it was not his practice to obtrude himself upon the attention of the House, after a subject had been fully discussed by his friends, nor would he have troubled them now, since so little, and that little worse than nothing, had been advanced in opposition to the eloquent and pathetic speech of his honourable friend, had not they been brought into a situation of difficulty, in consequence of the amendment which had been proposed. The honourable gentleman, he believed, had suggested the amendment (at least he gave him credit for the motive) from a wish to render the motion more palatable to the House ; and it certainly had met the entire approbation of one honourable gentleman (Mr. Windham), who had previously shewed signs of being desirous to speak, but who had remained apparently quite at his ease since the amendment had been proposed. While he was congratulating himself, however, upon the acquisition of the influence, the authority, and what was not the least consideration of that honourable gentleman, he was concerned to find that it had made them lose the vote of a learned gentleman (the Master of the Rolls.) [Here there was a cry of No ! No !] He hoped, however, that the motion would not be got rid of by a quibble, but they would come to a fair and intelligible issue ; and that conceiving it, as they must, to be an affair in which it was disgraceful for our ally, the Emperor, to act, and in which it was disgraceful for the Government of Great Britain not to interfere, they would, in a bold and manly way, vote an address to His Majesty immediately, to use his influence with the Court of Vienna in behalf of

the unfortunate persons who were the subject of this evening's debate. An honourable gentleman asked, if we were prepared to break off our alliance with the Emperor, if our intercessions failed of success? In the first place, there was no reason to anticipate a failure before the attempt was made; and in the next place, the failure of the attempt by no means implied the necessity of breaking off the alliance. With respect to the precedent of Mr. Asgill which had been disputed, the objection was not well founded; for though the application originated in the Queen, it came immediately from the King of France. And in the present instance, he was of opinion that it would be infinitely to the honour of those admirable feelings which our own illustrious Queen was well known to possess, were she voluntarily to interfere in behalf of those amiable but unfortunate persons, who are now languishing in hopeless captivity in the dungeons of Olmutz. The gentlemen on the other side of the House seemed to triumph in the silence of the honourable gentleman (Mr. Windham); and the reason, he firmly believed, was this: that he might draw aside the mysterious veil from this cruel, barbarous, and vindictive proceeding, with that manly and generous indiscretion by which the House knew his character to be marked. When he rose first, his right honourable friend (Mr. Pitt) put him aside, intimating to him, my nothing will be better than your something; my quibbles are better than your sophistry; and if I say nothing to the purpose, at least I will not betray any secret that ought to be concealed. In fact, Mr. Sheridan believed, that Mr. Windham's tongue was bound by the same cause as the Emperor's hands, and the House knew pretty well who was the gaoler. As a friend to freedom, he would rejoice when General La Fayette recovered his liberty; and as an old friend of Mr. Windham, he would feel no small satisfaction when he recovered his speech. He was sure also, that he would not find the House like the adder, which is deaf to the voice of the charmer. He really wished that some other gentleman in His Majesty's Councils had come forward; he hoped, at least, that an amendment would be proposed, that the discussions should not be confined in future to one side of the House, except in cases of special necessity. The right honourable gentleman seemed to feel very acutely upon the subject; the House, however, would not give him credit for the reality of those feelings, when they recollected that three years ago he condemned the proceedings against La Fayette as worthy of the execration of mankind, if the facts alledged were true; and now he came forward, affecting still to doubt of their truth, not having taken any measure to ascertain whether they

were real or fabulous. He had laid down a general principle about jurisprudence, which he endeavoured to apply to the case of La Fayette, as if that unfortunate person had been imprisoned for a criminal offence, and had not been a prisoner of war. He could see no other motive for the unprecedented rigour which had been employed against that exalted character, than that which was suggested from his being a moderate and steady friend to liberty; a motive which was not so likely to influence the Ministers of any government in Europe as the present Ministers of His Britannic Majesty—Ministers, who, on all occasions, had shewn themselves the enemies of every species of reform, the patrons of every abuse, and whose uniform system it had been to extinguish the spirit of liberty both in this and in other countries. The right honourable gentleman argued, that we had no right to interfere; and that if we did interfere, we were uncertain of success. With respect to the success likely to attend our interference, that could not be ascertained till an application was made. Besides, if it was a disgraceful affair, had we no interest in the character of the Emperor? Were we not engaged in a common cause with him for the attainment of a common object. It was one of the charges recorded against Mr. Hastings, that he had suffered allies in India to commit an act which disgraced the British name. But why had he recourse to India? Had not the right honourable gentleman compelled the King of Naples and the States of Genoa [vide Mr. Debrett's State Papers] to take a part against France? He referred to his own authentic papers upon the subject. For the character of General La Fayette, he had the highest veneration. He believed him to be a man of high and inflexible honour, and that he might vie with the brightest characters in the English history. To the spirit of a Hampden he united the loyalty of Lord Falkland. Had Louis the Sixteenth not fallen a sacrifice to the fury of a mob, rendered desperate by the abuses and corruptions of the old Government, which had bred up the race of sanguinary monsters, who perpetrated the atrocious act; and had General La Fayette returned to Paris upon the restoration of tranquillity, to get the reward of his conduct; if the King had thrown him, his wife, and her daughters, into a dungeon, there was not a humane man in Europe would not have said, that he ill deserved to re-ascend his Throne, and that he ought to have his Crown torn from his head. Yet this was the conduct which the Governments in Europe had pursued to these unfortunate persons, to their eternal shame and disgrace. What added to the cruelty of the punishment, was the helplessness of the victim. He was not in a situation when he was taken, to be

demanded back by the Government of France: but, had those foul insinuations, with which his character was attempted in this country to be blackened, been true; had he betrayed his trust, deceived his master, and, finally, imbrued his hands in the blood of his Sovereign, then he would have been reclaimed by the French Government; then the Princes of Europe, trembling at the command of the Directory, would have ordered the doors of his prison to be thrown open, and General La Fayette might even have been a Member of that Directory with which they were now obliged to treat. If the Court of Vienna was mean enough to take advantage of his helpless situation, Mr. Sheridan hoped that the French Government, overlooking the past, would reclaim La Fayette and his fellow-sufferers as French citizens. How much such a conduct would suit the generosity and magnanimity of the French Republic; and what a contrast it would be of Republican resentment at Monarchical gratitude, that from this Atheistical Government we should learn the principle of the forgiveness of injuries, and lessons of eternal vengeance only from the regular Christian Governments of Kings!

Mr. Sheridan concluded by repeating an observation which he had made last year, and which appeared to be something like a paradox, namely, that there never was a country in which there was more private worth or more public depravity than in this; and in expressing his firm conviction, that, were the present question to be decided by private feeling, the Minister would be left in a minority as small as the number of the speakers.

The Right Honourable WILLIAM WINDHAM, Secretary at War, said, that, if he had not intended to speak, he must have risen on the irresistible invitation held out to him in the latter part of the speech of the right honourable gentleman who spoke last. He rose, however, not as that honourable gentleman had so pleasantly furnished, to reveal any thing that secretly lurked in the bosoms of Ministers, but to tear the veil from the face of the honourable gentleman and his friends; and show to the House and to the world what was the mysterious motive to their humanity; what it really was that put their feelings in motion, what it was that suggested to them the extraordinary notion of selecting the Marquis De La Fayette, and marking him out as an object whose misfortunes entitled him to the general sympathy of mankind. It was true, as the honourable gentleman had said, he had once or twice before risen from his seat with a determination to state to the House reasons which he thought would be found unanswerable; why the motion, as it stood in its original state, could not with propriety be

granted. Other gentlemen, however, had caught the Speaker's eye before him, and obliged him to sit down: a circumstance which, in the end, was rather favourable to his view, since it enabled him to state with much greater force, and equal certainty of success, his reasons why the motion should not be granted, either in its original or amended state; as he, in his wish to state the question largely, would have found some difficulty in selecting the points which it might have been necessary for him to press upon the consideration of the House; but which now lay in order before him, so that he should be able to compress them into a very narrow compass. The House had been called upon by the honourable gentleman, in a speech of much ability, well calculated, from its style and delivery, to excite emotions of pity in their breasts, for a most extraordinary, unusual, and great interposition—on the plea of Humanity. The questions that arose from this were—the weight of merit of the sufferer, the degree of humanity to which he was entitled, and the right he derived from them to be considered a fit subject for general humanity. Before he entered upon the discussion of these topics, he would say a word of the merit of this gentleman who was the subject of the motion, as he stood with regard to this country. He had been one of the most active and irreconcilable enemies of England, in the American Revolution. His visit to this country, immediately previous to that step, was at best not quite correct. It was hardly to be supposed that he would designedly go there, fresh from the hospitality and civilities of this country, if he had not had some view injurious to it. He mentioned this merely to show, that this gentleman, who had been held out for our particular favour and interposition, was, at best, a perfect stranger to us; and could be viewed by us in no other light, than as one of those who rose and fell in the course of the French Revolution.

Viewing him then only as a person bearing a share in that Revolution, he conceived there was nothing to be seen in him different from those ambiguous or worse men, who, in a spirit of perverted and unjustifiable ambition, introduced that fatal Revolution into his country, and paused when the ruin had been irretrievably done. To him, and those who thought with him, that the authors of that Revolution had been the bitterest enemies of mankind, M. de La Fayette was no object of esteem or favour; and, if as a stranger he was to be considered at all, must be considered to disadvantage. With the honourable gentleman who made the motion, however, the Marquis stood in a different situation: there were ties between them of a personal kind—for in early life a friendship subsisted between them, which the honourable General (much to

his own credit, no doubt), would not suffer to be lost or obliterated, when his friend was in difficulty and distress. While he bore this testimony to the honourable gentleman's heart, he must in justice bear testimony to his ability also; and particularly to the singular address which he displayed in urging, with all its force, those parts of the case which were most likely to kindle feelings of sympathy in his auditors, while he touched slightly upon that part which was weak and untenable, namely, the fact of the seizure of M. de La Fayette, as contrary to the law of nations. This question had been before discussed, and from the first mention of it, it had been, and still continued to be, his unalterable opinion, that whether on the point of his having ceased to act with hostility, or on the point of his having been taken up upon neutral ground, the arrest was not contrary to the law of nations or of justice: For he was taken in the character of an enemy, which he could not lay aside at will, when it served his purposes. When two nations were at war, it did not depend upon one party only when the war was to cease; nor was it competent to one country, or any individual of either country, to divest himself of the character of an enemy, or claim the privileges of peace, without the concurrence of the other. It was certain, that the friend of our enemy was our enemy; but it did not at all follow that the converse of that was true, and that the enemy of our enemy was our friend. However the demands of personal safety, or the ruin of his ambitious schemes, had made the Marquis an enemy to the men who at that time filled the usurped Government of France, his hostility to Austria was not less than before, nor was he competent to divest himself of it, all at once, for his own convenience. As to the question of his being taken on neutral ground, it was one with which neither of the contending parties had any thing to do. To the third, or neutral power, on whose territory he was taken, and to it alone, it belonged to complain of the act as an infraction of neutrality; so that neither France nor America, and still less England, had any thing to do with it. Viewing the transaction, therefore, in its own direct form, and in all its relations, there was no injustice in it with regard to the infraction of neutrality—no violation of the law of nations.

The Marquis de La Fayette was, therefore, to be considered by the House (since he was forced upon their deliberations) first, as a prisoner of war, under the ordinary law of nations, and next as a stranger to England—this last position no one could deny. He was not a native, nor had he been naturalized; he had never been in our service; he had never been even our prisoner; this country

had no share in him or his services ; he was no inhabitant of any country which had been conquered and delivered up to the King of Great Britain ; he was not one of those who embodied in the cause of their lawful Monarch and Government, or joined those who ranged under the banners of England, and were murdered in cold blood by their enemies ; he never had even constructively put himself under the protection of this country ; he had never been friendly to her interests. So that he was as completely separate from this country, its interests, or its favours, as any other person whatsoever on the face of the globe.

On the subject of the Marquis de La Fayette's merit in the Revolution he would say but little : It had, in fact, been so slenderly relied upon by the honourable gentleman, that it was unnecessary for him to enter much into it ; but never, never should be forgotten his gross and criminal neglect in June 1789 ; never his conduct on the memorable 5th and 6th of October, in which there was clear and evident matter for condemnation, which, with the fate that subsequently attended him, should be an eternal lesson to all those who, actuated by similar motives of guilty ambition, would bring ruin on their country. When at the head of the National Guards, did he lead them, as was his duty, to the relief of his King ? If he had not done so, what excuse could be offered for him ? Would it be said, that he acted under the impression of terror for himself ? If so, would they insist upon that as an excuse ? or would they say, that he ought not to have risked his life. A soldier, honoured with such rank and favour, commanding the Guards, could not have fallen in a nobler cause. He ought, even though certain of death, to have encountered it in discharge of his duty, and expiated, in some sort, the great calamities his ambition had occasioned. His own excuse was, that he had no command over the Guards ; but what could be said of a man, who having declared that he had no command over troops, continued nevertheless along with them ? He should have retired, and in repentance endeavoured to atone for the ruins he had made. But no—It was well understood what part he played, and what end he had in view. After having amused the King with a promise, that there was no danger, which threw him off his guard : after the Palace had been forced, and the royal family placed in imminent danger, he appeared. Lulled into security by his promises, the King and Queen had gone to rest—the mob burst so suddenly into the Palace, that her Majesty was obliged to escape undressed. La Fayette said, that no father violence would be offered ; but when called for, was not in town. For how much mischief was he not answerable !

Having so far shewn the culpable conduct of M. La Fayette, Mr. Windham said he would now go to the great act of merit to which the friends of the Marquis had been obliged to resort for want of better, and on which they seemed to lay so much reliance, as an act that was to redeem all that he had done before, viz. his merit in shaking and breaking down that Constitution which had for ages existed, and which, though abused, was yet capable of reformation. Appeal had been made to his conduct, in having saved the King from that very danger into which his machinations had betrayed him; to all which he (Mr. W.) gave no credit, nor, he believed, would the House, or any unprejudiced rational person—no, not an iota of credit farther than this, that his ambitious strides had brought him to a period at which he was obliged to stop; and that he refrained from his own factious proceedings only when a more furious faction threatened to overpower him. He would not say, for he did not believe, that La Fayette wished entirely to destroy the King, or to erect a Republic in the place of the Monarchy, but that he wished to lower the King to a state of independence on himself, and to be, like Trincalo in the Tempest, “ Viceroy over
“ him.” To encounter such evidence of guilt, stronger proofs than any which had been adduced were necessary. Considering the temper and opinions of the honourable gentleman opposite to him, it appeared somewhat extraordinary that they should be advocates for La Fayette. They might be supposed to forgive his “ Treachery to his Sovereign the King,” but how could they pardon him for the more abominable crime of “ Treason to the Sovereign People?” This was one of the monstrous inconsistencies in which the conductors of Revolutions necessarily involved themselves. If La Fayette was fallen into misery, he had fallen the victim of his own act, and his own principles. He had brought himself into that state into which all fomenters of great and ruinous Revolutions must necessarily fall. He had betrayed and ruined his country and his King, and took refuge for his character and conscience in his own defeat; and claimed merit for stopping just at that point, beyond which it was out of his power to go; and then he became the enemy of those whom he had made the instrument of his designs upon the King. He was the first to bring destruction upon the Supreme Power, and the first that turned against the Jacobins. That he was the author of infinite calamities, no one would deny: of what his motives had been, there was no proof; but there was no more presumption in favour of his innocence, than there was in favour of any of the other persons who were concerned in that horrible transaction.

M. La Fayette, then, being thus proved to be, as to England, a total stranger, the question to which Mr. Windham proposed next to advert was, that of humanity, which, in point of fact, was the whole question of the night. With respect to the rigour with which that gentleman was described to have been treated, Mr. Windham declared he believed that there was much of exaggeration in it; but taken as a subject of humanity to work upon, he did not see how or why it should be separated, as it were, and selected from others. As the mere suffering of an individual, it must certainly excite pity; there was no case of calamity whatever, which, if seen abstracted from other considerations, but must excite the feelings of every one deserving the name of man. In this view all cases of suffering had a right to be considered; but was every case, public or private, to draw interposition in its behalf? Did gentlemen look round, and consider the innumerable calamities that by the wise dispositions of Providence beset human nature on every side, and offered so many subjects of appeal to our commiseration? Did they recollect how many, without offence or fault of magnitude, but merely under the influence of error, were drinking of the bitterest cup of life, to which it was impossible to extend interposition? Did they consider how many there were besides La Fayette, pining in confinement, for debt or for crime? To see or think of a human creature enduring the rigours of imprisonment, or being carried to the execution of that punishment which the laws award for the expiation of crime, abstractedly, must wring the heart of any man with sympathizing commiseration; but men should not, in such cases, consider the suffering separate from the causes and circumstances which occasioned it; humanity would kindle compassion; but reason must overrule that feeling in consideration of the cause.

This was the reigning practical fallacy by which questions of a very simple nature were attempted to be confounded. In the number of those who had produced the French Revolution, and followed it up with those enormities which had surpassed all that poets had ever fancied, there were many who, viewing their sufferings in naked abstraction, would excite compassion. For instance, that gentleman named Collot d'Herbois—he was condemned to Guiana, to which place vast numbers of the most learned and venerable men existing, the Clergy of France, had also been condemned, for no other reason but because they refused to abjure their religion, deny their God, and act in contradiction to their consciences. The place was chosen as that in which human nature would be most exposed to suffer, and every thing was done to render the natural evils

of the country more dreadful and destructive. If we were to abstract the sufferings of the wretch from the crimes that led to it, we could not but wish him rescued from such misery. We would say, (perhaps as others may say in nearly similar cases), " 'Tis true, Collot d'Herbois killed many thousand people ; 'tis true, that when the guillotines were insufficient, and the executioners were fatigued with putting them to death, he sent them, for more speedy dispatch, into a great square, where he fired upon them with cannon, and ordered in a party of cavalry to cut and trample to death the few who had escaped the guns ; but 'tis also true, that the thing is passed ; and that the men are in their graves, and cannot be brought to life again. Poor Collot ! he is not the better for being in Guiana—What is the use of it—Let us send for him, and bring him home—How can men of feeling think of prolonging the punishment of poor Collot d'Herbois !"

This, Mr. Windham said, was a perfect illustration of that false humanity by which gentlemen wished the House now to be guided ; but he would tell them, that true humanity taught a different lesson, and interdicted the practice of that spurious imposture under the name of it, which they advised. Mankind were not formed to pity at once the oppressed and the oppressor ; the choice of the honourable gentleman opposite, was to take up and espouse the cause of the oppressor ; but for his part, he would take up and espouse that of the oppressed.

He could not separate the idea of M. La Fayette from the millions who were suffering by his crimes. Did gentlemen doubt it ? Let them look into our streets, and see men equal to La Fayette in honour, in rank, in talents, in courage, in every valuable quality which his warmest advocates could boast that he possessed, exiled from home, ruined by the Revolution, of which he was the leader and instigator, and involved in misery, in wretchedness, and beggary, by his crimes. Did gentlemen who urged this measure know, or rather, was it possible they should not know, that the opinion of all the best-informed men in France was, that M. La Fayette's conduct to the King was cruel, ferocious, and unmanly ? And was it not universally known, from those who were in the confidence of the Queen of France, that that august and magnanimous personage often declared, he was the only man she could never forgive ? She was often heard to say, she could forgive Barnave, nay, would interpose between him and the stroke of the executioner—but never could or would forgive La Fayette.

Having discussed these points, Mr. Windham said, he would

now apply himself to a part which would bring the House nearer to the consideration of the propriety of interference.

Would the House, he asked, believe that the Emperor was unmindful of his consanguinity with the royal sufferers under this man's plans? Could they suppose that that Monarch, knowing all that had been just stated to be true, could fail of harbouring a just indignation against the author of his near relation's calamities and death? And were we, without being apprized what his designs were, or what his actual treatment of La Fayette, to interpose with respect to his mode of treating the personal author of such crimes? Surely not; it would be not only impolitic and impertinent, as respecting ourselves, but extremely indecent and improper, as regarding his Imperial Majesty, to interpose in a case that lay so very near him.

In answer to an honourable gentleman on the bench behind him, (Mr. Wilberforce,) who had countenanced the motion by a speech and an amendment, and in whose opinion it was our duty to go about Europe to dictate rules of policy, he would say, that his sentiments had overleaped the distinction made by the honourable gentleman opposite to him, for the same pitiable representation and relief which they confined to one, he would extend to all; so that where was the work of the House in interference to stop?

While scenes of misery in gross and in detail surrounded us, and pressed upon our senses, whichever way we looked, how was it that gentlemen were so cold and so callous, as never to be quickened into feeling but by the solitary case of Monsieur La Fayette? In the greater instances, when the worst horrors were going forward, when our ears were constantly assailed with the cries of one half of France murdering the other, did the House forget that the very suspicion that those sufferings were the motives to our interference, was sufficient to illegitimate all other causes of war; that this so vitiated it in gentlemen's estimation, that the whole formula of their objections, construed into plainer language, was, that the war was unjust and detestable, because excited by feelings for such misery and destruction!

If gentlemen wished for proper objects for the exercise of their humane feelings, let them look to thirty thousand priests pining in the prisons of France. They, however, thought more of that one man in the prison of Olmutz. There was, indeed, he said, something capricious and fanciful in their taste in objects of humanity. But of this it might be said, as of taste in other respects, to use an old Latin adage, *De gustibus non disputandum*.

Gentlemen boasted pretty largely of humanity and feeling, at the expence of others. Nothing was more mean or dishonest, than to endeavour to catch reputation by a display of virtue at other persons' cost ; to be courageous on other men's valour ; to be generous on other men's money ; to be charitable and magnanimous at the expence of the feelings of others. Thus displayed, instead of virtues they were vices. Dean Swift says, " All men could bear the misfortunes of others with Christian-like spirit." So these gentlemen opposite were very liberal in forgiving injuries done to Austria and the Queen of France. The merit of this, however, was not very striking. He had no hesitation in saying, that he felt very little consideration for the beginners of Revolutions. M. de la Fayette had been the first to attack the ancient monarchy of France ; and though he stopped short when he found that his own mischievous principles were turning against his views, though he had no objection to continuing the King upon his Throne, provided that he might be Viceroy over him, yet he could not feel for a man who was the author of a conflict that led to such horrors. Well or ill intentioned, he had been the author of the attack on the ancient system, which led to all these massacres ; and he should ever hold out as objects of marked reprobation, and of punishment, the beginners of Revolutions. The mass who might follow them, the lower ranks of society, who, from various causes, might partake in the violence, were easy to be forgiven ; but men of rank, who, from motives of ambition, originated Revolutions of established Governments in any country, were justly to be regarded with horror, and true humanity must be eager for their punishment. Besides, how could they enter into all the views of the Emperor ? There might be political motives mixed with the measure, of which they could not judge. It was well known that there were persons, both in France and out of it, who were anxious to exalt M. de la Fayette as the grand champion of liberty, that they might be able to cabal with him, to raise a new standard, and to bring about new revolutions in France and elsewhere. How could gentlemen tell, then, that the conduct of the Emperor might not be dictated by a wise and prudent policy, to keep this man fast, and prevent his committing new horrors ? It was curious too, that though there were two more persons in the same gaol with M. de la Fayette, he alone was mentioned with distinguished praise—he alone was the theme of condolence, by these persons who made the war the eternal burden of their song, but who never felt for the many thousands of unhappy victims which that war had made, and of which war the authors of the Revolutions must be considered as the true authors.

He again repeated, that the most just vengeance was due chiefly to those, who abounding in all good things, and filled with spleen and impatience drawn from the excessive enjoyments of life, with no haste to privation of their own comforts, with not one bit of Nun's Bells about them, would, for their own vile purposes, sport with the happiness of mankind; and play the deep and damnable game of ambition. He would not be sorry—indeed he would rejoice, to see such men drink deep of the cup of calamity which they had prepared for the lips of others.

On the whole, this was not a question of sentiment, but of prudence, policy, and general morality. If there were any grounds separate from those mentioned to sanction interference, he had no objection to interference being attempted; but he never would consent, nor would the House, he hoped, in the absence of other reasons, to do an act which would put a premium on Revolution, give the sanction of example to Treason, and reward to Rebellion.

Mr. FOX said, that the right honourable gentleman had shewn himself to be counsel against M. de la Fayette, and, like an advocate, he had endeavoured to search through all his life for accusations against him. In this course, however, he had brought some heavy charges indeed upon the Emperor. According to the right honourable gentleman, no hypocrisy could be more glaring than that of the Emperor, for the declarations which he had made were not the true motives of his conduct. He was said to be detained on account of the particular enmity which the late Queen of France bore towards him. It so happened, however, that two more persons were confined with him, who were not hateful to the Queen. M. de Matbourg and M. de Pufy, one of whom, the latter, was known to be particularly attached to the interests of the Royal Family. But if this were really the cause of their treatment, how comes it that others, who had been active in voting the King's death, should have been relieved by the Emperor? Why, but that they had the formidable Republic of France for their friends, and that M. de la Fayette and his unhappy companions were unprotected, and had no powerful friend to stand up for them. The right honourable gentleman had discovered also, that it might be owing to policy. The Emperor might dread that M. de la Fayette would enter into a cabal for bringing about a new Revolution in France. So the right honourable gentleman was in truth become the ally of the French Republic; he was negotiating for the Directory; he was anxious to save them from the peril of new conspiracies and new machinations. Even before the treaty of peace was signed, he was serving the French Government. The right honourable gentleman

charged them with not commiserating the other victims of the Revolution—the emigrant Nobles, and other persons who crowded our streets. Mr. Fox said, that he could not name a single occasion when they had failed to treat the misfortunes of these persons with commiseration; though undoubtedly they had not manifested it in the same way as the Ministers of this country. They had not sent them to perish at Quiberon, nor seduced them by promises which were never fulfilled, into situations where no gallantry could save them from the danger to which they were exposed; nor had they refused, even to their memories, the performance of their dying request, in justifying their honour from the disgrace of having advised an enterprize so frantic. But, good God, what sentiments and what doctrines had they not heard that night! What arguments had not the right honourable gentleman advanced!—“Well or ill intentioned,” M. de la Fayette ought not to be pardoned, because he was the beginner of the French Revolution; he was not to be pardoned, because thousands had fallen through his means. If he was not to be pardoned because thousands had fallen, what must become of the right honourable gentleman himself, and of the Minister of England, who had caused rivers of blood to flow by their wild and horrid enterprizes? But the beginners of Revolutions were the persons to be punished, however moderate and honourable in their views; however patriotic in their conduct; and whatever benefits they may have rendered to their country! Those who came after the beginners, and who might tarnish the cause of liberty by their excesses, were to be pardoned, but not the first beginners! According to this new doctrine, our great ancestors, to whom we have been accustomed to pay almost divine honours for the glorious services they have rendered to man, were men to be execrated and abhorred. Cromwell was a man to be excused by the right honourable gentleman, because he found things prepared, and only took advantage of circumstances; but Hampden, Pym, Lord Falkland, the Earl of Bedford, and all the illustrious men whom we have been accustomed to reverence, as having not merely rescued their country from intolerable evils, but pursued in their reforms the principle of the most generous humanity, and the most disinterested moderation, were objects of eternal execration. Hume was, he thought, severe enough upon Hampden, when he said, that he probably died at the favourable moment for his fame, since, if he had lived, he might, perhaps, have betrayed principles of violent ambition! But this was nothing to the argument of the right honourable gentleman, since the men who blackened the cause of liberty by their crimes were virtuous in compa-

rison of those who desired only to rescue their country from tyranny, corruption and abuse. Such was the whole jet of his argument. Collot d'Herbois, according to him, was no object of royal persecution equal to La Fayette: for Collot was a monster whose crimes would defile the cause. Liberty so tarnished could never be attractive, nor recommend itself by the purity and benevolence of its principles. It is not therefore the Collots that they hate, but the Fayettes, who by the unsullied patriotism of their motives, and undeviating rectitude of their conduct, prove that true liberty is the parent and companion of all the milder virtues of the heart. Mr. Fox said, he scorned to allude to any private transactions, but he believed that it was well known to many gentlemen in that House, that the right honourable Secretary at War was an admirer of the French Revolution in its first stages; he now, however, arguing from the violences with which its course had been tarnished, condemned the very principle of the reform of all abuses, and was for perpetuating the misery of the human race. Mr. Fox then shewed that La Fayette and his friends were distinguished for their moderation. They had sacrificed their popularity to this principle: it was well known that, after the 10th of October, the chief command of the armies of the Republic was offered to M. de la Fayette. Now, if he had accepted of that offer—if he had shared in all the violences that followed, he might at this day have been one of the Directory; and the right honourable Secretary, instead of pursuing the unhappy prisoner with vengeance, might be imploring the powerful Director, by an Ambassador at Paris, to grant peace to England!

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS thanked his right honourable friend for the speech he had made, and declared he never received more instruction and information from any one that he had ever heard. It had corrected all the false and delusive notions which had been sported that night. He was an enemy to these pretexts. He applauded the liberal, eloquent, and gentlemanly manner of the right honourable mover of the original question, but said that he had not equal reason to compliment the gentlemen who followed him. In his opinion the force and feeling of his opening speech had been diminished by all that followed it. The war, he remarked, which was always the burden of the song, had also been introduced on this occasion. With regard to the question itself, if the amendment were to stand, it was not subject to an objection to the original motion: in it, the attack upon the Emperor was left out, for stating that the imprisonment of La Fayette was an unjust act, implied a censure upon the conduct of our ally, but although it was left out, he called upon the House to say, whether they were ready

to concur in the motion, supported as it had been by the inflammatory and censorious speeches of the honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House. That there was invective used against the Emperor of Germany could not be denied, and the precedent was one unusual, unknown in the forms of Parliament. He believed the speech of the right honourable gentleman might make its way to Vienna, and upon that ground alone he would oppose the motion; for what appearance could it bear, when supported by such arguments? He remarked, that the gentlemen in Opposition had given up their original question, and adopted the amendment of his honourable friend (Mr. Wilberforce) in the hope of collecting all the straggling humanity of the House. He turned round to Mr. Wilberforce, and appealed to his understanding against the officious character of his humanity. Every one knew how he bustled in the cause of Charity—how every tale of woe was addressed to him—how no misfortune could happen in this world, but his heart must bleed—no sorrow could be felt, but his bosom must be wrung. But why could he not feel in secret? Why could he not go about doing good and blush to find it fame? Why must the House of Commons be made a party to the heroics of his humanity? Why must they be made the instrument of his good works? In his mind the House had no business to interfere. They would put His Majesty into a very awkward predicament. An address of the House of Commons was a grave and solemn thing, and it was not the custom of that House to ask that, which, if refused, they could not enforce themselves. In the present instance, where advice was to be given to another crowned head, when they did not know what forcible reasons he might have for detaining La Fayette, the application might be attended with a refusal, for reasons which it might not be possible to disclose, and then what would be the alternative? Besides, the motion might lay an imputation on the character of the Emperor, and make it believed in Germany, that he was not supported and beloved in Great Britain at a time when he had put his empire at stake. He also contemplated the probable effect of such a measure over the disposition of the Emperor, who was one of our most faithful, active, and zealous allies, and who, from such an address, might suppose himself an object of distrust in this country. He therefore thought the House would lose its understanding and its judgement, if it voted either the motion or amendment.

Mr. JEKYLL replied to what had fallen from Mr. Dundas. He said, the right honourable Secretary had exhausted himself in mere exordium, and had not condescended to argue the subject be-

fore the House—he had censured the irregular and straggling humanity of an honourable gentleman on the floor (Mr. Wilberforce), whose virtues were certainly of an irregular character—whose love of liberty was certainly irregular—whose love of peace was certainly equivocal. He appealed to the House, and to its humanity; but could not agree with the right honourable Secretary, that humanity should not even be dictated to those from whom it did not flow spontaneously. Unhappily that had been the sentiment of His Majesty's Ministers when a right honourable friend of his (Mr. Fox) formerly proposed to that House an interposition to save the unfortunate Louis XVI. from the scaffold by an application on the part of the British nation for mercy. Another right honourable gentleman (Mr. Windham) had censured anecdotes, and yet had relied on anecdotes communicated by French ladies to himself. If those anecdotes were authentic as to the unfortunate Queen's want of forgiveness in her last moments towards M. de la Fayette, surely her opinions, grounded but too probably on political prejudice, should not now turn the scale of compassion. In any point of view, those opinions were not brought to bear on the case of M. de la Fayette's two unfortunate friends, M. Bureau de Pusy and M. de la Tour de Rauburg. The right honourable gentleman had said, the war was always "the burden of the song" on the other side of the House, though Mr. Jekyll could not feel that the present topic had been mixed with it farther than as necessary and incidental. At so late an hour he would abstain from troubling the House with farther observations, and appeal to its justice and humanity.

General FITZPATRICK concluded with a short reply to the objections urged against his motion. He had acquiesced in the amendment proposed, because he thought that the question still embraced all the essential points which he had in view. He had listened to the speech of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Windham), besides a very violent attack upon the principle of Revolutions, in which was comprehended every endeavour to meliorate the condition of our species, it was no other than an ingenious and well-directed philippic against his friend Mr. Pitt—and the symptoms of feeling which he had manifested on the present occasion. The attack on the character of M. de la Fayette required little answer. Four years ago he had vindicated him against all the reproaches that were spread with so much virulence against him. Now they were renewed with an increase of bitterness, and as if they had not been refuted. In regard to Berthier's murder, the affair was perfectly understood. It was a violent tumult which

no exertion could avert. La Fayette had been appointed Commander of the National Guard but the day before, and they were not brought into discipline. In regard to the 5th and 6th of October, he had been hurried to Versailles by the guard. It was not his own intention to go thither, but his presence had done great good ; it had probably saved the lives of the Royal Family. He could only say, in answer to the report attributed to the Queen, upon the authority of a gentleman who was in England when he made his motion before, that the Queen declared to him that she owed her life to the good offices of M. la Fayette. He had abstained from all reflection on the memory of that unfortunate Queen. Perhaps it would have been more generous in the right honourable gentleman to have observed the same rule. With regard to the charge of the castle that night, he had asked it, and it had been refused ; and in regard to being retired to repose when the tumult broke out, and their Majesties were forced to quit the palace, it was not to be wondered that, after being sixty hours without sleep, he should seek for a little refreshment. General Fitzpatrick said that he had but two points in view in the motion : first, to relieve the unfortunate persons ; and, secondly, to vindicate the honour of Great Britain. He had abstained from going into the pretensions of the other two persons, the fellow prisoners of M. de la Fayette. The one had been married but a few months before to a beautiful woman, who went to Vienna to solicit for her husband, but not having taken the precaution of a concealed name, she had been ordered to quit the Austrian territories, just as Alexander Lameth had been ordered to quit England, and hurried away in twenty-four hours. The other prisoner was the father of eight children, and Mallet du Pan calls him an estimable and irreproachable character. The General concluded with a warm appeal to the generosity of the House.

They then divided on the amendment: Ayes, 50 ; Noes, 132.

The question was therefore negatived.

Saturday, 17th December.

Mr. Chancellor PITT brought up a message from His Majesty, which was read from the Chair, as follows :

GEORGE R.

His Majesty thinks proper to acquaint the House of Commons, that he is at present engaged in concerting measures with his allies, in order to be fully prepared for the vigorous and effectual prosecution of the war, if the failure of His Majesty's earnest endeavours to effect a

general peace, on secure and honourable terms, should unfortunately render another campaign unavoidable : and His Majesty will not fail to take the first opportunity to communicate the result of these discussions to the House. In the interval His Majesty conceives that it may be of the greatest importance to the common cause, that His Majesty should be enabled to continue such temporary advances for the service of the Emperor as may be indispensably necessary, with a view to military operations being prosecuted with vigour and effect at an early period ; and His Majesty recommends it to the House to consider of making such provision as may appear to them to be most expedient for this purpose.

G. R.

Mr. Chancellor PITT then moved, " That His Majesty's message be taken into consideration on Monday next." Ordered.
Adjourned.

Monday, 19th December.

Mr. Serjeant ADAIR, on account of the pressure of other business, and the desire of many gentlemen to give it a full discussion, postponed the commitment of the Quakers bill to Friday, the 7th of February, when no consideration should induce him personally to consent to a farther procrastination.

Mr. HOBART brought up the report of the Committee on the Post-office duty bill.

Mr. DENT hoped the House would take into consideration the receipts and expences of the Post-office, as well as the great defalcation of revenue by the number of franks, the different statements of which he made from the papers on the table, and submitted, whether some regulations might not hereafter be adopted.

The bill was then ordered to be engrossed, and read a third time to-morrow, if engrossed.

Mr. DENT wished it to be printed, as it was not altogether possible for gentlemen to be apprized of its contents.

Mr. GREY moved for a copy of the accounts in the Bank books, in the names of the Trustees employed for the redemption of the Imperial 3 per cent. annuities, invested in the Bank funds. Ordered.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved the order of the day, to take His Majesty's message into consideration.

The message was then read by the Speaker in the usual form.

Mr. Chancellor PITT then rose, and said, that important as His Majesty's most gracious message might seem, with a view to the situation and interests of this country, as well as to the situation

and interests of Europe ; important as it might seem to the vigorous and effectual prosecution of the war, or the possibility and hope of the speedy restitution of peace ; and important as it might seem, even if that desirable event should not take place, to be fully prepared for the other alternative, yet he had the satisfaction of finding the grounds so simple and so short, that he should have occasion to trespass upon the time and attention of the House for a few minutes only, since he trusted there would be no difference of opinion on the occasion. He had formerly stated to the House, what he thought would be the probable amount of the expences and provisions for the service of the present year, providing, at the same time, for any extraordinary or unforeseen expences which might also be incurred. He had stated to the House, upon a former occasion, that it would probably be necessary to furnish His Majesty's ally, the Emperor, with some farther pecuniary assistance, to enable him to prosecute the war with vigour and effect ; the amount of which he had calculated at the sum of three millions. Some advances to the Emperor, the House was apprized, already had been made out of the provision for the extraordinaries ; and His Majesty now thought proper to acquaint the House of Commons, that he was at present engaged in concerting measures with his allies, in order to be fully prepared for either alternative, a vigorous and effectual prosecution of the war, or a secure and honourable peace ; and had in consequence been induced to call upon that House for their assistance. The message of his majesty was confined, therefore, to the propriety of being fully prepared for the vigorous and effectual prosecution of the war, upon the hope of its accelerating a secure, general, and honourable peace ; or if the failure of His Majesty's earnest endeavours to accomplish that object should prove ineffectual, and unfortunately render another campaign unavoidable, then to enable his Majesty, in concert with his allies, to prosecute the campaign with vigorous and powerful exertions. His Majesty had been farthermore pleased to assure the House, that the result of the measures which he was concerting with his allies should, at the first opportunity, be laid before them. In the mean time, however during the uncertainty of prosecuting war, or of obtaining peace, His Majesty conceived it of the greatest importance to the common cause, to make application to the Representatives of the people at an early period, to enable him to continue such temporary advances for the service of the Emperor as might be indispensably necessary for either event ; and to consider of making such provisions as might be most expedient for that purpose. That this was the proper period when such aid ought to be given, it

would be improper to argue, because it would be wrong to suppose it could be disputed. Unless we were to abandon all the advantages we had already derived from the exertions of the Emperor, we ought not to discontinue that pecuniary assistance by which they were still to be supported. It would be a satisfaction to the House to see that the difficulties which last year existed to the measure of sending supplies to the Emperor were now, in a great measure, removed; and this would, no doubt, operate as a strong inducement with the House the more cordially to concur in the measure. But though the difficulties were now less, he was not sanguine enough to say, that they were totally removed; he should therefore conceive that it would be the object of the House to adopt that mode of proceeding in making remittances to the Emperor, which, in more difficult times, had been found practicable and expedient. Upon these grounds, though it might be prudent, in some degree, to limit the extent of the amount which might be necessary for the assistance of the Emperor, in the farther prosecution of the war, he conceived it would be wise and expedient to leave to the discretion of the Executive Government, the distribution, proportion, and the mode in which the advances should be made. It was his intention, therefore, to move an humble address of thanks to His Majesty for his most gracious message, and to assure him, that the House would take the measures he proposed into consideration, and afterwards refer the message to a Committee of Supply, to vote that a sum not exceeding 500,000*l.* should be granted to His Majesty for the assistance of his ally the Emperor; and that such temporary advances should be made as His Majesty's Ministers should think fit. Having stated this, he concluded by moving the address, which was, as usual, an echo of the message.

Sir WILLIAM PULTENEY said, that he totally disapproved of the mode by which it was proposed to give the aid to the Emperor, and he likewise disapproved the words in which the address was couched. They seemed intended to whitewash the conduct of the right honourable gentleman, and to imply that no censure had been expressed against the manner in which advances to the Emperor had already been made, though there certainly was conveyed in the amendment which passed on a former night a disapprobation of his conduct, and he was sure would be considered as such for a hundred years to come. The words of the address implied, that the mode formerly adopted was to be followed. He could not, however, but disapprove of that mode. The right honourable gentleman had defended himself on the former night of debate chiefly in a commercial view; but the argument he then sup-

ported was refuted by an account upon the table. Last year a very favourable loan had been made, and a person who had been disappointed in obtaining the contract, (Mr. Morgan), stated that he never calculated upon a loan to the Emperor, because he conceived it impossible to be carried into effect. Upon a former night an honourable gentleman (Mr. S. Thornton), a Director of the Bank, had told the House, that a deputation of the Bank had waited upon the Minister, and informed him that such a measure would be highly injurious to the commercial interests of the country. This declaration came from a powerful quarter, but it was the duty of Parliament to know what was the real state of the public credit. It was known that Government allowed the discount upon navy bills; in consequence of that procedure, persons did not care at what discount they sold them out. According to the accounts of the right honourable gentleman, from October to November, 1795, they bore a discount of $2\frac{1}{4}$ and $2\frac{1}{2}$. They were 3 in November, $3\frac{1}{2}$ in the beginning of December following, and 4 at the end. The discount was 4 in the month of January, 1796; in February, 3, though they were set down 5 and $5\frac{1}{4}$; in March, 5; in April, 4 and 5; and in May, 5. Thus, according to the giving out of the right honourable gentleman, the discounts had risen in a gradual manner, but never exceeded 5, while it was clear that navy bills sometimes fell to a discount of 14. According to his statement also, the plan for funding all the outstanding bills in October was to have a wonderful effect, which was denied by many gentlemen in that House; and experience had proved the truth of their statements; for though in consequence of that funding system, the bills fell to a discount of 3 per cent. yet immediately after, the discount rose again to 10 per cent.; and now a new measure for paying them was proposed, by drawing bills upon the Bank at three months credit. Thus from comparing the different rates of discounts of navy bills at the time when the right honourable gentleman had yielded to the idea that it was impossible to remit a loan publicly to the Emperor, it appeared that the discount then was lower than it had been since the navy bills were funded, a measure from which so much advantage was expected by the right honourable gentleman. From the mode which had been adopted, the Emperor could not know the extent of the assistance he was to receive, nor in this way could it have the proper effect upon his exertions. In fact, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had relied upon the statements given by the Bank, and had not derived his information from the state of the country. There were several causes which had produced the embarrassment that then prevailed. The Bank

altered their mode of accommodation in the way of discounts, and took their revenge on the country for the conduct of the right honourable gentleman, in clandestinely remitting sums to the Emperor. The right honourable gentleman seemed desirous to have the Emperor in his power, that he might influence him in the negotiations for peace. Did he wish to act by him in the same manner as this country had done at the treaty of Utrecht, and have it in his power to leave him in the lurch if he refused to co-operate in the measures that were in hand for peace? The proper way was fairly to come forward with a specific loan. The Emperor did not ask a subsidy; he disdained it: it was by a vote of Parliament for the purpose that it should be done. The exertions of the Emperor had saved Europe and this country, for the French would certainly have attempted an invasion here had they succeeded against Austria. The Executive Directory of France, in order that they might reconcile the people to the policy of acceding to the terms which this country should propose, seemed in this critical moment to have made public the exhausted state of their army, and their want of resources, and if the propositions of this country were accepted, the Emperor might be left alone, or forced to agree to any terms. The Emperor had rather shown a backwardness to the whole business of negotiation which had been going on, and he was shocked with the idea of any influence being used to induce him to act contrary to his opinion and inclination. The first objection the right honourable gentleman had intimated, as to a loan to the Emperor, was after he had received a hint from the Governor and Directors of the Bank, that it would drain the country of its specie. Hints coming from certain quarters might sometimes operate as commands. The Bank Directors tell the Minister, there must not be a loan, and it is instantly given up. He could not understand, he said, what business they could have to interfere in a measure in which, perhaps, the most important interests of Europe may be involved. If a loan is necessary for the Emperor, it certainly ought to be granted him, in spite of what the Bank Directors might say against it. It ought also to be to such an amount as would render him effectual assistance, and enable him, if peace could not be obtained on secure and honourable terms, to carry on the war in the most advantageous manner in his power. He had, he said, no idea of the assistance to be afforded to the Emperor being put into the hands of Ministers, to be meted out to him in such scanty portions as to them may seem prudent and proper, and not such as the necessity, the urgency, and the interests of his affairs may absolutely require; for these reasons, the honour-

able Baronet said he opposed the motion for the address, and concluded by moving an amendment, that the whole should be left out after the words, "take the same into consideration."

Mr. ROBERT THORNTON said, that, as the honourable Baronet had alluded to what had fallen from him on a former night, with respect to the Bank, he thought it necessary to correct the honourable Baronet where he appeared to have misunderstood him. The Bank had opposed the remittance of money from this kingdom, because the twenty-four gentlemen, who were in the direction of it, conceived that such a measure was not, at the time at which it was proposed, well suited to the pecuniary circumstances of the country. But this opinion had not taken its rise in their minds from any regard to the discount of the navy bills; it was founded on two points—on an observation of the course of exchange with Hamburgh becoming very low, and on the price which bullion bore in the market. In what the honourable Baronet had advanced to the House with respect to the various discounts of the Bank, he was, Mr. Thornton believed he could assure him, misinformed and mistaken.

Mr. NICHOLS thought this the commencement of a plan to send more money out of the country to the Emperor of Germany. He wished, before such a measure should be adopted, that those who were best qualified to furnish the House with information should be heard; and therefore, that the Bank Directors should be called to the bar of the House, and examined on the subject. He saw nothing in the circumstances of the times which should make that desirable in the present, which had been thought injurious in the last year. Our coin was diminished, and the sending of treasure out of the country was, in his mind, perilous, whether the sum remitted was made up in money, in bullion, or in goods. He knew the opinion which several gentlemen entertained with respect to the sending gold out of the country; that all fears on the subject were ridiculous. It should, however, be remarked, that the sum of five hundred thousand pounds, now proposed to be sent to the Emperor, was but the beginning of a system; two months hence a similar measure might be pursued; and, as a certain sum of money was indispensably requisite to the circulation of the paper of the country, the state of the coin should be well ascertained before this was agreed to. If it could be adopted with safety, and without occasioning any stagnation of public currency, he should not resist it. He begged to add, that he had been assured by a banker of considerable reputation, that 2 per cent. was paid by bankers for the exchange of gold into silver: what was the cause of this, and how

it was connected with the question under discussion, he did not know ; but of the fact, he had no doubt.

Mr. DENT thought strong language had been used against the Bank of England without any solid cause ; for in all his transactions with that Company, he had experienced the utmost civility. In regard to what they ought to do respecting the extent of their discounts, he conceived they were themselves the best judges. The House had no right, he conceived, to inquire into their arrangements, especially when such inquiries might tend to injure public credit. He considered the act of King William, which limited the number of partners in any firm to fix, as a measure to support that institution ; and therefore any competition with it would be in violation of that act. This shewed how much its credit was the object of the attention of Government ; and as that credit was never greater than when it went hand in hand with Government, he thought the Directors would not offer any opposition to a necessary measure of Government. Admitting that the plan of competition with the Bank, which he understood was in agitation, should take place, he felt no hesitation in asserting, that the one would continue to enjoy that share of public confidence which its punctuality had always merited, while the other would be nothing but a bank in air.

Mr. FOX said, he thought he should have acted improperly if he did not take notice of the subject which was now before the House. He should, however, do it very shortly. It was now a fact not disputed, that a large sum of money had been sent to the Emperor during the sitting of Parliament, and no intimation whatever was given of that event to the House. The sum which was now suggested was, to him, a trifling consideration, when compared to the danger of the principle on which it was proposed to be voted, and the practice which the Minister might follow it up with, since after this vote he might send money to the Emperor without the consent of Parliament, in the same way as he had done already. Suppose that the House granted the sum of 500,000*l.* as now proposed ; and suppose also, that the House should express itself in the clearest manner as to the mode in which this money was to be applied. What then ? The Minister would, in the mean time, advance as much more money to the Emperor as he should think fit ; or, if he should think fit, he would withhold any part, or the whole of it. The House might express themselves in their address to His Majesty as correctly as they pleased ; they might limit the application of the money in what way they pleased ; the Minister would afterwards pursue his own plan, and apply the money as he

should think fit ; he would afterwards, whenever he condescended to address Parliament on the subject, tell them, that it was true he did not apply the money specifically as voted by the House, for that the exigencies of the public service required he should apply it in another manner ; that unforeseen events occurred which required that he should make such disposition of it. This would not be new conduct in the present Minister, for the House had lately found that he had issued large sums of money before he deigned to come to Parliament to ask for it. This, in the opinion of some persons, might be a very proper way of carrying on the affairs of Government. Some might think that the Minister might come to Parliament at any time ; to which he must say, that his chief objection was to the House of Commons carrying on such a farce and delusion to the public, by pretending that it had any thing to do with the ways and means over which it no longer continued to exercise any power of control. He would vote for the amendment, because it tended, in some degree, to shew that delusion to the public. He had listened, as he ought to listen, with great attention to the honourable Baronet who proposed the amendment, and he was ready to confess, although there were some parts of his speech which he agreed with perfectly, there were other parts with which he could not agree. The latter was the case with regard to what the honourable Baronet had said of the Bank. He conceived that the House of Commons had nothing to do with the mode in which the Bank managed their discounts. The Bank, in his opinion, were the sole judges of the manner in which they should manage their discounts. The public, as he conceived, had no right to interfere in that business, nor had the House of Commons any authority upon the subject. It was not, in his opinion, their business to express either praise or censure upon the Bank in its conduct with regard to discounts. But if the House had what it ought to have, what it formerly had, the control of the finance of the country, and the Bank were compelled to adopt a certain mode different from their usual one, that is, to narrow their discounts, in consequence of the conduct of the House in financial affairs, then, indeed, the observation of the honourable Baronet would be very applicable to the subject now before the House ; for certain it was, that the conduct of the House might compel the Bank to narrow their discounts, supposing the House to have the control of the application of public money. He was not now questioning how far we ought to advance money to the Emperor. He was not saying now, we should not, or ought not to send to the Emperor any more money, for that was not the topic which he wished to discuss at

present. He could not help observing, however, that if we were, at all events to give to the Emperor any farther pecuniary aid, it would be better in the shape of a subsidy than that of a loan; for he thought the security of the repayment of a loan to be such as was very precarious. When we granted a subsidy we stipulated, at least, for something as an equivalent; when we made a loan, there was to be considered the probability of repayment, which was not, in his opinion, very great. The House, therefore, instead of entrusting these matters to the Minister, ought to confide in its own judgement. This was, in some measure, the object of the amendment, and therefore he should vote for it: but after all, if the House did not interfere in the conduct of the Minister in sending money out of the country, all they could do upon this amendment would amount to nothing but a delusion to the people, telling them that the House had taken the public purse into their own hands, while, in reality, they had abandoned it to the disposal of the Minister.

Mr. GREY agreed in the sentiments uttered by his right honourable friend upon this subject; agreed in part also with the honourable Baronet who had moved the amendment. His right honourable friend had preferred a subsidy to the loan; and why did he? Undoubtedly his right honourable friend had stated correctly the nature of the security. It was, in his opinion, essential that the House should consider of the nature of that security, not only to the public, but also to the subscribers who had embarked in the Austrian loan, under the faith and authority of Parliament. The House should advert to what had been done in the loan to the Emperor, in which there were two points to be considered—the interest of the money, and the 92,000*l.* which the Emperor was to provide for the reduction of the capital which was now in arrear. This being the case, the House ought to know the security they had to trust to. The Emperor had failed in the first of his engagements in a certain degree, and totally with regard to another part of the engagement; for no such remittance as that of the promised 92,000*l.* had taken place in point of fact. The public had therefore suffered by that event, and the holders of stock were materially affected. The Minister talked much of those qualities which are the necessary companions of valour—that of good faith in pecuniary concerns. Now, giving his Imperial Majesty credit for these qualities, he wished to know what expectations the House had of the repayment of any future loan, when it found he had not fulfilled the engagements he had already made on others. But the sum now to be voted, as his right honourable friend had said already,

was, to him, comparatively of little importance when placed by that of the conduct of the Minister towards that House in matters of finance. He wished to know what the Minister could say on the fraudulent account which he caused to be laid before the House last year, in answer to a motion of his upon the vote of credit? When he asked how the vote of credit was applied, he said, that part had been applied to the army, and part to the ordnance. It now appeared, however, that a very considerable part of that sum had been applied to the support of the army under the Prince of Condé. He put it, therefore, to the House, whether they would allow the Minister not only to send money out of the country when he thinks proper, but also to permit him to lay false accounts of the application of that money before the House?

Mr. Chancellor PITT remarked, that the honourable gentleman who supported the amendment, seemed to rely a great deal upon the argument, that it was better at once to give a sum by way of subsidy to the Emperor, than by way of loan, as he considered the security given for repayment in the latter instance to be not of much value. If, however, the loan given did not exceed the amount of the proposed subsidy, even in the worst case the country could not be greatly a sufferer. It had been noticed, that his Imperial Majesty had not hitherto made good the stipulated instalments, and the interest due upon the former loan. The arrangements for that purpose with the Court of Vienna had not been completely settled. But he put it to the House, whether, under all the circumstances of the present year, a failure of this sort could be considered as any proof of want of faith on the part of the Emperor? The honourable Baronet seemed inclinable to quarrel with Ministers, because they had not adopted a resolution to advance a much larger sum for the service of his Imperial Majesty, without considering that the sum which he suggested, might be more than either His Majesty wanted, or this country could conveniently spare. All those who supported the amendment admitted, that some advance was necessary to a greater amount than was now proposed; he did not therefore apprehend any very serious objection to the address.

Mr. GREY said a few words in explanation.

Mr. SHERIDAN wished to ask the Minister two questions: the one a matter of fact, the other a matter of opinion. Whether the whole amount of the money advanced to the Emperor (excepting a small sum which was retained out of the last payment to his Imperial Majesty) is not now due to this country? And while this sum is four millions and an half, and the Emperor is applying for

another loan, if that sum should be doubled, what security have we that any punctuality will be observed by the Emperor in his future payments?

After the gallery was cleared, in expectation of a division on Mr. Pulteney's motion, which however was negatived without a division,

Mr. SHERIDAN rose, and, after a short introduction, proposed the following amendment at the end of the address:

“ Your Majesty's faithful Commons having thus manifested
“ their determination to enable your Majesty to give such assistance
“ to your Majesty's ally the Emperor, as may be indispensably ne-
“ cessary in the unfortunate event of an unfavourable issue to the
“ present negotiations for peace, cannot omit this occasion of ex-
“ pressing their deep regret, that your Majesty's Ministers should
“ in recent instances have *presumed* to issue similar assistances to the
“ Emperor *without* any previous application to Parliament so to
“ do; thereby acting, *as your Majesty's gracious message appears in a*
“ *great measure to admit*, in defiance of the established practice, and
“ in violation of the constitutional privileges of this House.”

Negatived without a division.

The House then resolved itself into a Committee of Supply, when the following resolution was moved:

“ That a sum not exceeding 500,000l. be given to His Ma-
“ jesty to be applied to the service of the Emperor, to be issued at
“ such times and in such a manner as His Majesty may see most
“ proper.”

Mr. FOX called the attention of the Committee to the resolution which was now before it. He wished to ask whether they had any reason to know what would be the effect of what they were now called upon to do? Had they any means of knowing what would be the application of this money if Parliament should grant it? How did they know that the money was not advanced already? The manner in which Ministers had brought the money affairs of the public before Parliament, was so complicated that it was impossible the House of Commons could understand them clearly. When the Minister gave an account of the vote of credit for the year 1796, he blended different services together, made a general fund for them, and afterwards placed the different sums applied to different services under their proper heads; by which means it was impossible for the House of Commons to see properly into the falsity of the Minister's accounts. He would ask, under what pretence it was, that the Minister applied a vote of credit, given expressly as a prospective provision for exigencies which might arise,

to services which, to his knowledge, had arisen antecedent to that vote? He asked, why the Minister deceived that House so shamelessly, why he made use of His Majesty's most sacred name, thereby imposing upon the House more speciously, to state what, he knew would be a deception upon the House? The Minister took a vote of credit avowedly for services which he said were to come, at the very time he knew these services had actually taken place. Why did he conceal that fact when he stated his accounts to the House? The extraordinaries were made up from different periods in what is called the budget; and afterwards followed up to the end of the year 1795. Why did the Minister conceal from the House at that time the money that had been advanced to Colonel Craufurd, and then call it money to be applied to unforeseen services, as they might occur? These expences had been incurred in the summer of 1795, and were actually paid in December of the same year, before the Minister opened his Budget, and obtained that vote of credit. Why did he do this? To deceive the House of Commons with false accounts. The Minister said that the vote of credit *de facto* was applied to other services, and that in the result the accounts were fair; but this was deceiving the House with a false account; for when the Minister came forward with the accounts under their proper heads of service, it was found that the sums which were voted expressly for prospective services, had been actually applied to former services. So that under the sanction of a message from His Majesty, the House of Commons voted a sum of money for prospective services in 1796, which were applied to services performed in 1795. Thus did the Minister obtain money under false pretences. The consequence of such conduct might be dreadful to this country, for it took away entirely the discretion of the House of Commons by depriving it of the means of judging of the estimate of any services whatever, and made them give blindly to the Minister sums of the public money without any knowledge of their application, until it was too late to judge of the propriety of that application. If the Minister was to be permitted to pursue such a plan as this, there would be an end entirely of the power of the House over the public purse; for thus the Minister had taken a course of obscurity, concealment and fraud, for it was nothing less than obscurity, concealment and fraud to ask for money for prospective unforeseen services, and afterwards to apply it to antecedent and known services. There was no point of view in which he could put this case stronger than that which he had done already, namely, to consider this as the case of a steward. If a gentleman's steward were to apply for money to defray future expences, and having ob-

tained it, applied it to defray the expences which he had formerly incurred, but had concealed from his employer, that would not be deemed a very faithful steward, and the transaction would be said at least to be very suspicious. Such was at best the case of the Minister. If the House should suffer this to pass without their marked reprobation, they would, in his opinion, abandon the very principle on which that House could be said to be worth any thing to the people of this country. He did not know how far this dereliction of duty was to be carried. He would aver, that if money was to be thus voted, and no measure taken to check the Minister in his scheme of fraud and deception, not one Member of that House, with all the talents he could call into action, could be able to tell his constituents what was the account of the expence with which they were loaded in the course of the votes which have already passed this session, because the whole was left to the discretion of the Minister. If the House of Commons were so to conduct themselves, he did not see how they could be of more service to the people of this country than a body of gentlemen of the same number, who met at any other place for their amusement.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that the observations of the right honourable gentleman did not at all apply to the question immediately before the Committee—the propriety of voting a sum of 500,000*l.* for the service which had been stated. They referred merely to former accounts, which had been last year the subject of discussion. He had always held out that the money raised by Exchequer bills was applicable to the purpose of the general supply of the year. He had last year stated precisely the same doctrine. He had then asserted the propriety of a retrospective use of the vote of credit under certain circumstances, as well as with a view to any unforeseen emergency which might occur. The accounts which had last year been produced, related merely to the different funds from which a sum had been raised, and did not distinguish the particular services to which it had been applied. So much had been raised by Exchequer bills on the land and malt tax, by Exchequer bills on the distribution of annuities, and by Exchequer bills on the vote of credit. So much had been paid to the Bank of England, and so much to the Paymaster General of the Forces. A sum had been expended to the amount of eight millions, but it was not stated how much had been applied for the establishment, and how much had been incurred for extraordinaries. If it was asked, Why the extraordinaries were not made up to the 24th December, so as to distinguish those expences which were now made the ground of objection? the reason simply was, that the bills had

not been paid by the Paymaster General till the 31st December. It was true that the sum had been beforehand advanced by the Bank, and it was expressly stated to the House at the period of the former discussion, that there were certain arrears then due to the Bank. But till the bills had been paid by the Paymaster General, the sum did not come to be reckoned among the amount of the extraordinary. No account of the particular allotment of the sums had been given last year, because no such account was then called for. As to the argument that it would be impossible, by the mode of proceeding that had been adopted in producing the accounts, to know the true state of the finances of the country, it was undoubtedly impossible, amidst a number of complicated objects of expenditure, to ascertain precisely at one period all the details. But, he trusted, that it would appear that last year there had been no attempt at concealment, and that no information which had been required had been withheld so far as it could at the time be properly produced.

Mr. GREY said, that he wished to use the utmost brevity on the present occasion, as he was desirous as much as possible to keep the right honourable gentleman to one point, and to prevent him from evading any precise explanation by the misapplication of words. He desired to ask, Whether from the whole of the statement he had now made, any honest and intelligent man could derive the means of understanding the state of the accounts, as laid upon the table? From the mode in which the right honourable gentleman talked of making use of the vote of credit, no account could be intelligible. When he (Mr. Grey) called last year for accounts, he wished to ascertain not only how much had been expended, but how much had been applied to each particular service. Such was the object of his motions at that time. The right honourable gentleman now said, that so much was raised by Exchequer bills on one fund, and so much on another. What had this to do with the information which he had required as to the application of the different sums? When he found from the accounts, that eight millions had been paid to the Paymaster General of the Forces, would not any plain man understand that this sum had been incurred for the service of the army? Could he possibly conceive that, under this description, was comprehended the amount of a subsidy to the Prince of Condé? If such a mode of applying the public money, and afterwards stating the accounts, was sanctioned by the House, the act of appropriation would be merely waste paper, and the distribution paper good for nothing: there would be an end of all that control which Parliament affected to possess over the purse of the nation, and the disposal of the revenue would, in

future, be entirely left at the discretion of the Minister. When, under the description of money paid to the Paymaster General, they found that there was a sum of 341,000*l.* remitted to the Prince of Condé, and another sum of 1,400,000*l.* expended for a different purpose, what confidence could they have in the accounts laid upon the table, and what security against the improper application of public money?

Mr. Chancellor PITT, in reply to Mr. Grey, stated, that the account of general services, which was last year laid upon the table, gave as much information as it purported. The honourable gentleman must have known that the mode of issuing money for the service of foreign troops was by bills drawn upon the Paymaster General, and that all bills of Exchange were also drawn in the same way. The account of last year, indeed, gave no items with respect to the application of the expence, and no items had then been demanded. If the honourable gentleman at that time wished to ascertain the particulars, he ought to have brought forward a motion for that purpose.

Mr. GREY said, that he must object to an inference so often resorted to by the right honourable gentleman, that a Member of that House was not entitled to complain of any instance of public abuse, because he had omitted to bring it forward on a former occasion; with respect to himself, if he had had the least notion that under the article of Army Expenditure was included a large subsidy to a foreign Prince, he would not have failed in the first moment to remonstrate against so gross a misapplication of public money. But though he daily saw the right honourable gentleman in the habit of violating acts of Parliament, and making continual inroads on the Constitution, he did not conceive him to have been guilty of a conduct so expressly in the teeth of existing acts, and so entirely subversive of every constitutional principle. It was on this ground only that he had omitted to touch on the particular topic now in question, as the period of last year, when he had exerted his best endeavours to get to the bottom of that foul and monstrous system which had been adopted by Ministers in the expenditure of the public money.

Mr. Chancellor PITT was sorry that the honourable gentleman made it requisite not only for him to use a great number of words, but to use the same words oftener than once. He did not complain that the honourable gentleman argued against a measure now, which he had let pass without animadversion before. All he said was this, that the honourable gentleman, last session, got all the information which he asked for, and that he gave a proof that he was

satisfied with the degree of information which he received by not objecting to the accounts as deficient or unsatisfactory in any respect. But now that he had got some more particular information, than what he was then in possession of, in the plenitude of his politeness, his candour, and his justice, he termed that a concealment on the part of Ministers, which was neither more nor less than an account under a general head, which was now presented in a more detailed point of view.

Mr. FOX was of opinion, that the transaction alluded to by his honourable friend, was not only a concealment, but a fraudulent concealment; and he appealed to the House, whether they could give any other colour to the transaction? He asked if it was to be expected, if any person ever imagined that the account of the extraordinaries of the army contained a loan or subsidy to a foreign Prince? What was the nature of a vote of credit? It was completely and directly prospective, and could never communicate to him any authority to apply the sums voted to the discharge of arrears previously incurred. In order to be convinced that it was solely its object, he referred them to the words of the act. There they would find its object to be to provide not for such expences as shall have arisen, but for such expences as may arise. He referred also to the language which the right honourable gentleman had held in opening the Budget for 1796. He then calculated the extraordinaries for the ensuing year lower than they were last year, and he assigned this reason: The extraordinaries for the year 1795, he alledged, had been high, because we had an army to maintain upon the Continent, an expence from which we would be freed in the present year. He never mentioned, however, his intention of sending half a million to the Prince of Condé's army, though he had determined upon the measure; and though he well knew that this would make the extraordinaries of the army this year full as high as they were last year. But here the right honourable gentleman thought proper to defend himself by referring to the dates at which the bills were paid. This, however, was a most silly and superficial apology; for every one saw, that, though the bills were not paid till December, they were all drawn before, some of them as early even as the month of June. He must have known at the opening of the Budget of this expence, and yet he concealed it, and for what reason? To deceive and delude the country, and to shew the House that the public money was at his, and not at their, disposal. After this concealment, he afterwards brought down a message from the King, applying for a vote of credit, not to discharge past arrears, but to provide for future and unforeseen services. The

application was evidently wholly prospective: there seemed to be nothing retrospective, either in the views of the right honourable gentleman, or in the intention of the House of Commons. His conduct then appeared to be dictated by no other motive than that of deceiving, deluding, and cheating Parliament into an assent to a measure about which he was either afraid to commit them, or respecting which he would not condescend to acknowledge them. He again put it to the Committee, whether they would tolerate such conduct in a steward; an allusion which, in his opinion, was extremely applicable to the relation in which the right honourable gentleman stood to the House of Commons. He put it to gentlemen, not only whether they could form a precise idea of the state of the public finances, while such conduct was allowed to pass without reprehension; but whether they could form any estimate, or even guess at the expences of the country at all. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer came forward, pretending to calculate the public expence for the ensuing-year, was it to be supposed that, in this calculation, he had past extraordinaries in his eye? In the present instance, however, knowing what the actual expences of the country were, he concealed them from the House of Commons, wishing to keep them ignorant, either of the real expences of the war, or of the plan of granting subsidies which he had adopted. Here Mr. Fox observed, that the right honourable gentleman was smiling: as much as to say—"What! would I not have dared "to communicate my intentions to the last Parliament? What is "there which I would not have dared to communicate to them?" But, said Mr. Fox, after they had done so much for him, perhaps the right honourable gentleman did not choose to put them on hard service on the session preceding the dissolution. He again insisted, that it was totally impossible for any man unconnected with the Treasury to form a just opinion of the finances of the country, while the Minister was permitted thus to disclose or to conceal whatever expences he might think proper. How was it possible for the Committee to know, that even on this day there was not a million sent to the Emperor beyond the sum now applied for? If he had used strong language, it was, in his opinion, justified by facts; and therefore he would not retract it. He sat down, desiring that the vote of credit act for last year might be read.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he should not again enter upon the topics which he had gone over twice before; he could not, however, permit the misrepresentation of the right honourable gentleman to pass unnoticed, that 500,000*l.* had been issued in December.

Mr. FOX interrupted Mr. Pitt, and denied that he had ever said that 500,000*l.* was issued in December; he had said, that expences to that amount were incurred previous to December.

Mr. BOUVERIE reprehended the conduct of Ministers. He thought nothing they had done could be included in a vote of credit which was prospective. He said, he wished to bring forward, as much as any man, the negotiations, but he thought money should not be sent out of the kingdom without the knowledge of Parliament. He had taken a deal of pains in examining precedents, but he had found none which applied to justify such a conduct.

Mr. SHERIDAN observed, that the Minister was powerful in speech, and seemed to have had a patent for putting words together; yet he had discretion to be silent on proper occasions, as was then the case with respect to one point. On a former night he had stated the necessity of concealing from the public the knowledge of the money sent to the Continent; therefore it was impossible that a fair account could have been given to the House. There were other gentlemen who stood in a situation of responsibility, besides the Minister, and he wished to hear from them some information on the subject. He wished to know accurately, whether any interest had been paid for the money already borrowed by the Emperor; or whether deductions had been made for that purpose out of the instalments advanced to his Imperial Majesty? It was material that the House should know this, or know whether the Emperor would have sent the interest, provided no advances had been made from this country, in order that they might judge of his future punctuality. The British Parliament must expect the punctuality of a merchant, and not depend on the gallantry of a hero for the payment of these sums. He would therefore add, as an amendment to the resolution, "That 500,000*l.* should be granted to the Emperor when his exigencies upon the last loan are fulfilled, or satisfactory reasons given for the failure."

Mr. Chancellor PITT acknowledged the fairness of the honourable gentleman's deduction. He stated explicitly, that the interest on the loan had been paid at the time stipulated; and whether that interest was deducted out of any part of the loan, or transmitted in a more circuitous manner from Vienna to London, was a matter of no consequence. He vindicated the Lords of the Treasury as to their conduct in the business; observing, that the answer to be made in consequence of a request from that House was to be given by them, not on personal or individual knowledge, but from official information received. And with regard to the

mode of procuring that information for that House, he said he had himself given it to the honourable gentleman, previous to his framing a charge against him. He observed, that the Treasury, as such, could no otherwise interfere in inquiring into the manner of the Emperor's fulfilling his engagement, but by applying to the Emperor's agents for information. As to the guarantee, he acknowledged he was bound to have more precise information on that subject; and he took upon him to say, that the Parliament had not guaranteed the payment of the sinking fund, however much the public or individuals would have a right to complain, if there was any failure on the part of the Emperor. He then proceeded to correct the statement, that two years and an half had elapsed since the Emperor had begun to pay any part of the sinking fund, observing, that the engagement was not made till May 1795, nor could the sinking fund take place after that, till the whole sum was advanced upon the loan; so that the period of two years and an half was, in fact, little more than one year; and whoever calmly and candidly reflected on all the continental transactions of the Emperor during this period, would be hardy, indeed, to infer, that the Emperor had no intention to execute his agreement; and he would cheerfully submit it to the judgement of the House, whether there was sufficient ground to oppose the measure proposed.

Mr. SHERIDAN contended, that the guarantee for the payment of the interest of the loan, and the sinking fund for the redemption of the principal, stood upon the same ground, and that the creditors of the Emperor in each case look to the public as their guarantee. He doubted whether, without advancing fresh sums to the Emperor, he could have paid the interest of the former sums borrowed, and thought this held out but poor encouragement to expect the repayment of the principal sums advanced. He wished to know also, whether the *actions* of the Emperor's Austrian dominions were deposited in the Bank of England as a security? Whether the 5,000*l.* monthly, or 60,000*l.* annually, had been paid according to the treaty, and had been applied towards the buying up of the bonds at the market price, and for the purpose of a sinking fund for the redemption of the capital of the loan. In short, Mr. Sheridan insisted that there was a failure on the Emperor's side of every part of the treaty, and that the 500,000*l.* now proposed to be advanced, was to enable him to fulfil his former engagement with the British public.

Mr. Chancellor PITT in reply said, what he had stated was, not that the public had no interest in the fulfilment of this treaty,

but only that they were not to be considered as guarantees to individuals. Were there any just grounds for apprehending any failure on the part of the Emperor, he allowed that it might be very proper for the investigation and interference of Parliament ; but that was not the question then before the Committee.

Mr. BOUVERIE wished to know whether the 500,000*l.* now moved for, had been actually remitted to the Emperor ?

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied, that the object of the measure now proposed was, to take the authority of Parliament for sums to be remitted, and not to cover any former remittances.

Mr. SHERIDAN wished to know whether Ministers considered themselves authorized to take the Prince of Condé's army into British pay, and continuing such payments without the previous consent and approbation of Parliament ? For this measure, he observed, was virtually the same as increasing the loan to the Emperor.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that was a question totally irrelevant to the subject before the Committee.

Mr. Sheridan's amendment was then put and negatived without a division.

The original address being voted,

Mr. FOX asked the Committee if every individual was not perfectly convinced that all the money which had been sent to the Emperor, during the sitting of Parliament, might have been issued without any inconvenience in a similar mode ?

Mr. Chancellor PITT announced a material alteration in a new cavalry bill, which provides, that as an encouragement to persons enrolling themselves as volunteers, three-fourths in volunteers shall be held equal to the whole of the number proposed to be balloted, and that any individual who shall come forward as a volunteer, shall have it in his power to exempt any particular class from the ballot, providing, however, that this class shall be at the expence of supporting the horse so supplied.

Tuesday, 20th December.

Mr. NICHOLLS said, that previous to the report of the Committee of Supply of yesterday being taken into consideration, he thought that the House ought to call upon the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank, to attend and inform the House, what were the reasons that induced them in a former instance to object to the measure of an Austrian loan ; and to say, whether these reasons had now ceased to exist. In the course of the conversation yesterday, it had come out that two of the principal reasons were the high

price of bullion and the rate of exchange, and that all the Directors had concurred in the opposition. It was a fact that fifty guineas on one thousand pound could be made by melting the coin, and while this was the case it was impossible that the quantity of specie could be kept up by coining. There was certainly good reason to be cautious before such a measure as that of sending so much money out of the country was adopted. It was highly becoming the dignity of the House to enquire into the subject, and to know whether we still were in the situation that would render it improper to diminish the quantity of coin in circulation. This was but the beginning of a system, and much larger sums might afterwards be proposed. A distinguished character (Mr. Burke) who was known to be, in some measure, the political director of some gentlemen upon the Ministerial bench, had recommended the prosecution of the war against France in that quarter where she was vulnerable, and that was in the centre of her dominions. He did not know if the Minister was wholly of this opinion, but he had heard rumours of new subsidies to Russia; and if this idea was to be acted upon, more sums might be drained out of the country. He had been one of those who never thought the war necessary, and he did not altogether agree with some about the value of the objects for which it was to be continued. He did not conceive it as of such vast consequence to reconquer the Low Countries for the Emperor, nor was the object of such magnitude and importance as to justify or compensate for our sending money abroad to the danger of overthrowing the great springs of our prosperity. The state of Europe was changed since the peace of Utrecht, when that country was gained for the Emperor; and now were it restored to him, it must be defended by the money of Great Britain; should France ever attempt to regain it, He was of opinion, that a certain quantity of coin was necessary; and that it was not enough that there should be coin to circulate the paper. There was at present a very great scarcity of coin. The silver coin especially was very scarce. He did not know the cause from which the latter circumstance arose, but the fact was certain. He could not think of sending more money to the Emperor, when the money he had last received cost this country 100 per cent. for the profit which individuals had made on the depreciation of Government paper had arisen from the quantity of it in the market which had been issued for the purpose of enabling Ministers to send him supplies. It would therefore be highly necessary for the House to consider what would be the consequence of sending more money out of the kingdom; great embarrassment from the scarcity of money had been felt by tradesmen in the metropolis and elsewhere, which

if the cause were increased, would likewise reach the higher ranks ; he should therefore move, " That the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank be required to attend at the bar this day : " when the report of the Committee of Supply is to be taken into consideration.

Mr. GREY seconded the motion ; and the question being put, it was negatived without a division.

The report of the Committee of Supply being brought up,

General TARLETON observed, that the pompous and exaggerated accounts which had been frequently given to the House by Ministers, of Austrian victories and successes, would almost persuade a man of plain understanding to believe, that the Austrian armies were, at the time in which he was speaking, advanced as far as Chalons in France, and had extended their light troops to the very barriers of Paris. But as he considered eloquence employed in stating matters of fact to be a very dangerous species of delusion, he would, with the permission of the House, point out the local situations of the Austrian armies, at the periods when they received various sums of money, loans and subsidies from the inhabitants of Great Britain, and their actual situation in the month of December, 1796. He professed he would not enter much into military detail, but endeavour to give a clear, yet concise, account of the real state of our ally. It must be recollected by gentlemen who sat in the last Parliament, that different sums of money were first supplied to the Emperor's agents in 1794, when his army was in Flanders, and on the frontier of Holland. It must be recollected likewise, that the loan of four millions six hundred thousand pounds was furnished in 1795 to his Imperial Majesty when his troops were in possession of Luxemburg, the strongest inland fortress in Europe. But at this period the Austrians have not even an outpost within seventy miles of that fortress.

The General said, he considered it a duty incumbent on the present House of Commons to observe and mark the particular situation of the Imperial armies at the commencement, and at the conclusion of the present campaign. What was the situation of the Imperial armies when they went into winter quarters on the arrangement of the armistice, Colonel Craufurd's letter, dated December 21, 1795, from the head quarters of General Clarys's army, would best explain. " His Excellency's line now extends from Dreyckhausen on the Rhine by Strombergkirk and Oberstein to Berkenfeldt, from whence the left of his army is connected by a chain of light troops with Marshal Wurms's right, which occupies Kaiferlautern, by Neustadt, along the

“rivulet called Spirebach to the Rhine. The Austrian light troops
“scour the country from Berkenfeldt to Treves. Part of Marshal
“Wurmser’s army, and the Prince of Condé’s corps, defend the
“right bank of the Rhine from Phillipsbourg to Basse.” The
General then continued: The House must bear in mind, that this
disposition of the Imperial armies covered a very large district of
country on the left bank of the Rhine; he must therefore now
place before them the actual situation of the Austrian and French
armies. By means of the money, advanced by Ministers (and if
we advert to the periods when that money was advanced, the House
will be inclined, he thought, to believe with him, that His Ma-
jesty’s Ministers had considerable influence with the Austrians in
breaking off the armistice) the present campaign commenced; in
which, much skill, personal valour, and persevering intrepidity,
might justly be ascribed to both parties; for he hoped he was not
so blind, so prejudiced, or so bigoted, as not to allow an enemy to
possess the brilliant qualities he had just mentioned. But after
various success, what he demanded is the present situation? Not-
withstanding all the gallantry and intrepidity exhibited by the
Archduke, which no man admired more than he did, the French
had expelled the Austrians from the Palatinate, and after having
over-run the greater part of Germany, from whence they had drawn
great contributions in money and kind—had subsisted their armies,
which were in great distress at the opening of the campaign, for five
months on the Austrian magazines—had compelled several Princes
of the empire and the circles of Franconia, Suabia, Saxony, and
Bavaria, to detach themselves and their contingents from the Em-
peror, and to accept peace; the French, he repeated, have at this
moment possession of the whole left bank of the Rhine, and, in
addition to Dusseldorf, three considerable passages over that river.
By means of Huninguen, Kehl, and Neuwiud, they have the faci-
lity of advancing into the heart of Germany whenever they shall
deem such an enterprize prudent and advisable; and from the ex-
hausted state of the country on the right bank of the Rhine, the
Austrians, if they do not speedily retake those places, will be
obliged, on account of the want of provisions, to retire to some dis-
tance from the present scene of action.

From this point of active operation, the General said, he would
direct the attention of the House to one not less active, or less im-
portant. With respect to Italy, where events of the greatest mo-
ment had taken place, he should simply state, what had been, and
what was, the situation of our ally. If he adverted to the King’s
speech in 1795, he there found a leading paragraph, which he would

read to the House: "In Italy the threatened invasion of the French has been prevented, and they have been driven back from a considerable part of the line of coast which they had occupied." On this part of His Majesty's speech many Members in the late Parliament had laid considerable stress, both in that House and in another. A noble Lord, high in the confidence and councils of His Majesty, had stated, "that the enemy had been prevented over-running Italy, where France would have acquired great riches, which would enable her to prosecute the war with vigour." Now no one, he believed, would deny that General Buonaparte had over-run Italy, and was in possession of every strong place, except Mantua. Nay, he would state, and not be afraid of contradiction, that if that General was to meet with reverses of fortune, and be obliged to abandon the siege of Mantua, he still would be able to find in the fortresses of Tortona, Asti, and Alexandria, a barrier against the Austrian armies. In that event, which did not appear very probable, he would have made an advantageous campaign, and by keeping possession of the strong holds just mentioned, he might again invade the Emperor's dominions in Italy when an opportunity offered. The result of the campaign, therefore, to the allies might be described in very few words. The Imperialists, after various and heavy losses, had not a single soldier on the left bank of the Rhine; and in Italy, notwithstanding an Austrian and Sardinian army guarded the entrance of that country, Lombardy and the estates of the Emperor had been over-run by the French; Sardinia and other powers had been compelled to purchase peace; and the English had been ignominiously expelled from the island of Corsica, and the ports of Leghorn and Genoa.

The General then begged the House to recollect, that the first sums of English money had been advanced to the Emperor whilst his armies were in Flanders. The great loan had been furnished when he was in possession of Luxemburg. Large supplies had been afterwards *unconstitutionally* sent to him when he held a considerable territory on the left bank of the Rhine, and the whole of Italy. Now bushels of English guineas are to be wrung from the inhabitants of this country, when his armies are situated on the right bank of the Rhine, and the left bank of the Brenta. To what do these councils tend? Will not the experience of three years enlighten Ministers, or open the eyes of Englishmen? Have we not, with considerable disadvantage to this country, drawn important sums from the circulating medium of commerce in order to purchase the destruction of hundreds of thousands of the human species? Have not our allies lost a considerable tract of rich and

populous territories? And yet we are told in brilliant speeches, to view our *successes* with satisfaction. We are congratulated on the gallant achievements of the Archduke. If such bombast statements prevail with this House, we shall be congratulated next year on the safety of Vienna! Such expressions of satisfaction and congratulation, said the General, reminded him of the story of the Dutchman who, having lost his leg, expressed his satisfaction that he had not lost his head.

The report was then read a first and second time.

Mr. GREY observed, that as it was his wish the amendment proposed yesterday by his honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan) to the resolution of the Committee should appear on the Journals of the House, he should move an amendment which would go to the same end. It appeared from the accounts laid upon the table, that the Emperor had not complied with the conditions of the loan, either with respect to the annual remittances or to the provision for the sinking fund. There was not, as the right honourable gentleman had observed, an arrear of one year only, for the payments were to have commenced on the 1st of May, 1794. But with the exceptions of 11,060*l.* stock, which had been purchased with one month's remittance, no payments whatever had taken place. This was a material consideration both to the public and to individuals before any new advances were agreed to be made. He had already stated the difference of price between the Imperial 3 per cents. and the consolidated 3 per cents. and he found on inquiry, that he was warranted in that statement. As the public were the guarantees of the loan, the risk was certainly greater in proportion as the conditions on which it was granted, were not fulfilled. He was not debating the policy of the measure, but wished to view the transaction as it had been carried on. The right honourable gentleman had said, that in the present sum of 500,000*l.* nothing was included for the Prince of Condé. Yet it could not be denied, that remittances had been made for the army under the command of that Prince in December and Spring last for services in 1795; bills had been drawn even previous to December 1795, and they were continued in February and March since. But as that corps had been acting constantly from that time, he wished to know from the right honourable gentleman, whether money was not to be remitted for these services, and whether it was his intention to come to the House for a new supply? Mr. Grey then moved as an amendment to the resolution of the Committee of Supply, after the words expressing their concurrence to grant the Supply, "Whenever it shall appear, that the engagements of the last loan have been fulfilled, or

that satisfactory reasons have been given for the failure of the same."

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, as the subject had been fully discussed in the Committee last night, he should say nothing on the merits of the amendment. But with respect to the question put to him by the honourable gentleman, on the sums which it might be found necessary to issue to the Prince of Condé's corps, though he could not take upon him precisely to state what these sums might amount to, yet he believed the farther sums which would be yet drawn for, would be about 80,000*l.* or probably 100,000*l.* to be included in the army extraordinaries. This question might, however, be discussed after the recess. He had no difficulty in saying, that the honourable gentleman's statements were completely erroneous; for it was evident, that the sums paid were not all incurred in 1795. Above 200,000*l.* were drawn for and paid by Colonel Craufurd in 1796. He had anxiously endeavoured to ascertain the exact facts, and he had found his own statements correct, without trusting to his general recollection. With respect to the question of collateral securities, he had already suggested, that a motion might be brought forward on that head. It was, however, necessary for him to repeat, that the House would on inquiry, be satisfied, that the conditions had been exactly complied with.

Mr. FOX contended that 308,000*l.* had been paid anterior to the 1st of October 1795. He had carefully looked at the papers on the table, and found himself justified in making that statement. [Here Mr. Fox referred to the papers]. He then admitted, that he had overlooked several dates, and that only 250,000*l.* had been paid before the term to which he alluded. He therefore called on the right honourable gentleman to declare, whether the House was to hear of any other sums sent to the Prince of Condé?

Mr. Chancellor PITT observed, it was a matter of some satisfaction to find that the right honourable gentleman admitted he had been guilty of an erroneous statement. It was to be considered certainly, as a mere error, yet he hoped it would be a lesson to gentlemen that they should be very cautious in charging others with fraud, since they were from their own concessions guilty of errors themselves, and were proud to be so from the evidence of papers on which they founded their charges, and which they considered as authentic documents.

Mr. FOX replied, that he was ready to give the right honourable gentleman the full benefit of the misstatement of which he had been so violently charged, and which he himself had previously admitted.

The amendment was then negatived, and the resolution of the Committee agreed to.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, that previously to his submitting to the House a general statement of the affairs of the East-India Company, he should make a motion, of which it would be necessary to enter into some explanation. The House were aware, that when an enemy's country was in the possession of the British arms, the laws of navigation immediately attached upon that country. As soon as Martinique and part of St. Domingo were occupied by the British, those laws applied to them; and therefore the object of his motion was to procure an exception in favour of the Cape of Good Hope. The possession of that place was infinitely valuable; and it might be held without any injury being done to any other country; it might be held with full justice to the interests of this nation, and at the same time so as to leave all other countries upon a better footing than they were at any former period. When the Cape was possessed by the Dutch East-India Company, it was possessed as a strict monopoly, and ships touching there were subject to great inconveniences and restrictions, in procuring the necessaries for continuing their voyages. When vessels from Denmark, France, or any other part, touched at the Cape, they were forced invariably to pay a price for provisions much superior to that which the Dutch themselves paid. The object of his motion must, he was aware, be limited; he should, therefore, propose, that as long as the Cape should be in His Majesty's possession, His Majesty in Council should be allowed to make regulations respecting the commerce to and from that place. It was not His Majesty's intention to hold it upon strict colonial laws, nor that ships of other nations should be prevented from touching there, nor that they should be precluded from the sale and barter of the produce of their own nations. He wished that a part of the navigation act should be read; and after it had been read, he moved, that the House should immediately resolve itself into a Committee, to consider of the trade and commerce to and from the Cape of Good Hope.

Sir F. BARING looked on such a preface to the East-India Budget as a bad omen for the public relative to peace. He should, for his part, be glad to hear of something more palatable, and he would therefore oppose going into the Committee. The Cape of Good Hope had been so long in the possession of the Dutch, that gentlemen were not, perhaps, fully prepared to consider the subject in all its relations. The Cape certainly appeared to him in a very different light from what it did to the right honourable gentleman,

as a valuable acquisition. He considered it as a heavy burden to the public, and should pronounce it an object of no moment in the negotiation then carrying on. The Cape was surrounded by a desert thirty miles in extent. He was proceeding to state the local disadvantage of the Cape, when he was called to order by

Mr. Chancellor PITT, who said, that the honourable gentleman had been guilty of a mistake in supposing this to be the preface to the India Budget. It was a point of considerable importance, on which the question simply was, whether the House should go into a Committee; it was not proposed to inquire, whether the Cape of Good Hope was, as the world had hitherto conceived it to be, a place of the greatest value, and a possession the most desirable, perhaps, on the face of the globe; but the object, which the Committee was to report on, was, whether, as long as His Majesty should continue to hold it, he should be bound by the strict letter of the act of navigation, and should be compelled to exclude other nations from a participation of its benefits? His right honourable friend, who entertained a high opinion of the value of the Cape, thought that other countries might be permitted to share its advantage with us; but the honourable Baronet, who considered it as of no value, was unwilling to suffer others to have a share of these benefits. He submitted to the Baronet, whether the value had any thing to do with the present question.

Sir F. BARING said, that conceiving the advantages of this colony had always been greatly over-rated, he thought that, at the present juncture, it might be of some use to declare that opinion.

The House then went into a Committee.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, that having stated the nature of what he was to submit to the consideration of the Committee, he should avoid entering into the discussion suggested by the honourable Baronet. All that he should say was, that he hoped, as long as His Majesty should hold the Cape, which he sincerely trusted would be for ever, it would be held in such a manner as not to debar other nations from any benefits which they might derive from frequenting it. He should therefore move, "Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Committee, that the Chairman do move the House for leave to bring in a bill to enable His Majesty in Council to regulate for a limited time the trade and commerce to and from the Cape of Good Hope, &c."

Mr. HARRISON thought the measure proposed by the right honourable gentleman was only a prelude to a variety of additional expences and emoluments: it would tend to the superfluous appointment of staff and other officers. It appeared more advanta-

geous to him if the Cape were in the hands of a weak power, than in the possession of this country. He was of opinion, while it remained in our hands, it would raise the jealousy of other powers, and prove a bar to the success of the present negotiation, as it would look like a disposition, on the part of this country, to establish a monopoly in its own favour.

Mr. Chancellor PITT observed, that the reasons urged by the honourable gentleman appeared somewhat inconsistent. He first talked of the additional expence which it was necessary to incur for the purpose of keeping the Cape, and yet he was desirous of seeing it in the hands of a weak power which certainly could not be equally competent with this country to bear that expence. The honourable gentleman next argued that the measure would establish a monopoly, and yet the very object of the measure was a relaxation of the navigation laws, which, in every point of view, defeated the end of monopoly. The honourable gentleman then proceeded to lay some stress on the probability of the Cape proving a bar to negotiation, when it was evident that the possession of so valuable a settlement could alone tend to accelerate the conclusion of negotiation. Thus on the separate grounds of expence, monopoly, and policy, the honourable gentleman had urged nothing but what could be refuted by his own principles.

The resolution was then agreed to, reported to the House, and a bill ordered to be brought in accordingly.

The order of the day being moved to resolve into a Committee of the whole House, to take into consideration the papers presented from the India House, &c.

Mr. DOUGLAS in the Chair,

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, that in the statement which he had now to bring forward, he could not promise not to consume a considerable part of the time of the House; he had, however, the satisfaction to premise that he should be able to bring the subject which he had to submit to the Committee into a much narrower compass than usual. This advantage he owed to the mode in which the accounts were now prepared. Several years ago the servants of the East-India Company had not prepared their accounts with any degree of accuracy; they had drawn them up, rather as matter of form to be submitted to the cursory inspection of the Court of Directors, than with a view to afford any correct information, or undergo a minute inspection. Under these circumstances, in consequence of the distance, which occasioned a considerable delay before any regulations could take effect, two or three years had elapsed before the accounts were brought into such a state that they

could be reduced to any clearness of arrangement, or considered as proper documents on which to found resolutions of that House. The regulations adopted had now, however, operated to produce a very high degree of improvement. The accounts were, at present, in such a state, that he flattered himself there were not many points on which it would be necessary for him to go into any minuteness of detail. He should therefore, in the first instance, content himself with stating the general results, leaving afterwards to gentlemen to propose their question with respect to any part of the subject on which they might wish for more full and distinct information. The subject divided itself into four general heads ;

First, the Result of the Accounts from the different Settlements ;

Secondly, the Result of the Accounts from all the Settlements combined in one View ;

Thirdly, the State of the Affairs of the Company ;

Fourthly, a combined View of the State of the Affairs of the Company at Home and Abroad.

From an investigation of the particulars comprized under those four heads, it would appear to the Committee how far those expectations which he had held out had been realized, and what was the real state of the prosperity of the Company. He trusted it would be found that every hope which he had formerly suggested had now been fully confirmed, and that even his most sanguine representations had not exceeded the truth.

With respect to the first head, the Accounts from the Settlements, he would divide them into three classes. He would first take the average for the three last years ; secondly, he would draw a comparison between the estimated account and the actual produce ; and, thirdly, he would endeavour to present to the Committee what was likely to be the future state of the receipts and disbursements.

The following is the statement of the figures, as they were read by Mr. Dundas to the Committee. The different numbers quoted in the statement refer to accounts laid upon the table of the House, and printed for the use of the Members.

BENGAL—CURRENT RUPEE at 2s.

	Rupees.	£.
REVENUES—No. 1. Average Revenue, 1793-3,		
to 1794-5	5,77,42,130	5,774,213
Which is more than average stated last year by	34,88,959	348,895

		Rupees.	£.
No. 3. Estimate for 1794-5	—	5,58,06,068	5,580,607
Actual amount	—	5,93,79,314	5,937,931
More than estimate	—	35,73,246	357,324
CHARGES—No. 3. Charges for 1794-5 were			
estimated at	—	3,27,86,345	3,278,635
Actual amount in the year	—	3,47,73,960	3,477,396
Being more than estimated	—	19,87,615	1,98,761
Deducting excess of charges from excess of			
revenue, the actual amount of net revenues			
more than estimated, is (No. 3.)			
		15,85,631	1,58,563
And the net revenue of this year is			
		2,46,05,354	2,460,535

ESTIMATES 1795-6.

No. 1. Revenues estimated to amount to	—	5,63,12,780	5,631,278
No. 2. Charges to	—	3,50,88,226	3,508,823
Estimated net revenue	—	2,12,24,554	2,122,455
Revenues estimated for 1795-6, less than ac-			
tual of preceding year			
	—	30,66,534	306,653
And the charges estimated for 1795-6, more			
than preceding year, by			
	—	3,14,266	31,427
The estimated net revenue of 1795-6, is less			
than the preceding year			
	—	33,80,800	338,080

MADRAS—PAGODA at 8s.

REVENUES—No average from 1792-3 to			
1794-5 can be formed, on account of receipts			
from Tippoo, for treaty and subsidies from			
Travancore and Cochin, now transferred to			
Bombay; also receipts from the Nabob and			
Rajah, varied by treaties, but excluding			
them, the average of the three preceding			
years is exceeded by the sum of			
	—	Pagoda. 4,62,515	£. 185,006
The revenues 1794-5, were estimated at			
No. 6. Actual amount in that year was	—	46,38,293	1,855,317
	—	44,39,455	1,775,782
Revenues less than estimated	—	1,98,838	79,535
CHARGES, No. 6.—Charges 1794-5, estimated at			
Amounted to	—	44,55,617	1,782,247
	—	44,22,812	1,769,125
Charges less than estimated	—	32,805	13,122

Deducting deficiency of charge from deficiency of revenue, the actual account is worse than estimated by ———

Pagoda.

£.

1,66,033

66,413

ESTIMATE 1795-6.

No. 4. Revenues estimated to amount to

50,60,075

2,024,030

Charges, to — — —

46,11,968

1,844,787

Estimated net revenue

4,48,107

179,243

BOMBAY—RUPEE at 28. 6d.

Rupees.

£.

REVENUES, No. 7.—Average Revenues,

1792-3 to 94-5 — — —

25,00,060

281,257

9. The revenues 1794-5, estimated at

31,32,104

352,362

Actual amount in that year — —

27,77,600

312,480

Revenues less than estimated

3,54,50

39,882

CHARGES, 9.—Charges 1794-5, estimated at
Amounted to — — —

67,33,791

757,551

62,03,768

697,924

Charges less than estimated

5,30,023

59,627

Deducting deficiency of revenue from deficiency of charge, the account is better than estimated by — — —

1,75,519

19,745

ESTIMATE 1795-6.

7. Revenues estimated to amount to

23,98,013

269,776

8. Charges, to — — —

63,90,230

718,901

Charges estimated more than revenues

39,92,217

449,125

BENCOOLEN and other SETTLEMENTS—SPANISH DOLLARS 5s. each.

Span. Doll.

£.

10. Revenues of Fort Marlbro', on average of three years, 1791-2 to 1793-4

18,611

4,653

Charges, ditto — — —

238,393

59,598

11. Supplies from Bengal to Fort Marlbro', Pinang, St. Helena, &c. estimated for

C. Rs.

£.

1794-5 — — —

10,46,320

104,632

18. The actual amount was — — —

7,48,572

74,857

Being less than estimated

2,97,748

29,775

11. Estimated supplies in 1795-6 — — —

8,17,800

81,780

GENERAL VIEW.

RESULT OF THE YEAR 1794-5 COLLECTIVELY.

Revenues, 3.—Bengal	-	-	C. Rs.	5,93,79,314	5,937,931
6.—Madras	-	-	Pagodas	44,39,455	1,775,782
9.—Bombay	-	-	Rupees	27,77,600	312,480
					<hr/>
					8,026,193
CHARGES.—3. Bengal	C. Rs.	3,47,73,950	3,477,396		
6. Madras	Pags.	44,22,812	1,769,125		
9. Bombay	Rupees	62,03,768	697,924		
					<hr/>
					5,944,445
Net revenues of the three Presidencies					<hr/>
DEDUCT—18. Supplies to Bencoolen, &c.	-	-	-	-	2,801,748
					<hr/>
Surplus revenues, 1794-5					2,006,891
More than estimate 139,147 l.					
DEDUCT—Interest on debts, paid from the surplus.					
18. Bengal	C. Rs.	39,94,223	312,422		
19. Madras	Pagodas	22,019	8,807		
20. Bombay	Rupees	6,76,198	76,072		
					<hr/>
Total interest					484,301
					<hr/>
Net surplus from the territorial revenues					1,522,590
Add 15. Amount sales of imports, certificates, &c.	56,21,774	562,177			
					<hr/>
Amount applicable to purchase of investments, payment of commercial charges, &c.					2,084,767
Application of preceding sum in the year.					
18. At Bengal investment, including charges			C. Rs.	1,10,84,487	1,108,449
19. Madras ditto		Pagodas	13,41,021	536,808	
20. Bombay ditto		Rupees	14,81,212	166,636	
22. Bencoolen ditto		C. Rs.	2,65,524	26,552	
					<hr/>
					1,838,445
Short of amount applicable to investment					<hr/>
					246,322
					<hr/>
22. Cargoes invoiced to Europe in 1794-5 were			C. Rs.	2,17,81,180	2,178,118
					<hr/>

GENERAL VIEW.

RESULT OF THE ESTIMATES FOR 1795-6 COLLECTIVELY.

REVENUES, No. 1. Bengal	-	-	C. Rs.	5,63,12,780	5,631,278
4. Madras	-	-	Pags.	50,60,075	2,024,030
6. Bombay	-	-	Rupees	23,98,013	269,776
					<hr/>
					7,925,084.

CHARGES, No. 2. Bengal	C. Rs. 3,58,88,236	3,508,823
5. Madras Pags.	46,11,968	1,844,787
8. Bombay Rupees	63,90,230	718,901
		<u>6,072,511</u>
Net revenues of the three Presidencies		1,852,573
Deduct		
No. 11. Supplies to Bencoolen. &c.	-	81,780
		<u>1,770,793</u>
Estimated surplus revenues, 1795-6,		
pounds sterling	—	—
Less than last year by 236,098l.		
Deduct		
No. 16. Interest on debts, C. Rs.	40,02,523	400,252
		<u>1,370,541</u>
Net estimated surplus from the territorial revenues for 1795-6, pounds sterling	—	—
Add		
No. 15. Estimated amount sales of imports, certificates, &c.		
	C. Rs. 42,46,252	£. 424,625
Amount estimated to be applicable to purchase of investments, payment of commercial charges, &c.		£. 1,795,166
Which is less than the actual amount of last year by 289,601l.		

DEBTS in INDIA—Current Rupee at 2s.

No. 16. Amount stated last year	C. R.	7,30,54,619	7,305,462
16. Amount this year	—	6,81,37,366	6,813,737
		<u>49,17,233</u>	<u>491,725</u>
17. Debts transferred in the year exceeds decrease, but cannot be accounted for, by reason of the dates of accounts being different.	Decrease	C. Rs. 88,80,580	888,058

DEBTS bearing INTEREST.

16. Amount last year	—	C. Rs. 5,59,72,994	5,597,299
16. Amount this year	-	5,32,88,681	5,328,868
		<u>26,84,313</u>	<u>268,431</u>
Decrease of debts bearing interest	—	C. Rs.	
16. Amount of interest payable by the accounts of last year		C. Rs. 43,70,469	437,047
16. Amount of interest payable this year	—	40,02,523	400,252
		<u>3,67,946</u>	<u>36,795</u>
Decrease of interest payable annually	—	C. Rs.	

ASSETS IN INDIA.

No. 21. Consisting of cash, goods, &c.

last year	—	—	C. Rs. 8,80,76,009	8,807,601
Dirto by the present statements			8,86,72,663	8,867,266

Increase of Assets	C. Rs.	5,96,654	59,665
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Adding the increase of assets to
the decrease of debts, the
Company's affairs in India
are better by — —

C. Rs.	55,13,907	551,390
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HOME ACCOUNTS.

Expectation stated last year regarding the sales, far exceeded
private trade goods, 136,000l. more than preceding year,
a considerable quantity of Dutch goods sold according to
the act. The whole sales collectively were —

£. 8,158,495

The sales of the Company's goods were estimated at

5,517,500

And actually amounted to — — —

6,588,969

Exceeding the estimate — — —

1,071,469

The charges and profits on private trade were estimated at

60,000

The actual amount was — — —

148,417

Being more than the estimate —

£. 88,417

GENERAL RESULT.

Balance of cash estimated to be deficient last year —

371,838

Actual balance remaining this year after paying off 498,255l.
of the bonded debt, and having borrowed 150,000l. from
the Bank — — —

459,398

ESTIMATE, 1796-7.

Two accounts presented. The first prepared at period di-
rected by the act.

Expectations having varied, rendered it necessary to lay be-
fore the House that presented 31st October.

The last estimate differs from the former in expected receipts
from sales, less — — —

26,000

is more than sales of former years — —

248,000

RESULT.

The first estimate expected a balance in favour, on the 1st of
March, 1797, of — — —

118,248

The last a deficiency of — — —

1,028,275

Difference £. 1,147,123

DEBTS AT HOME.

In March, 1795, were	—	—	6,946,323
No. 23—In March, 1796,	—	—	7,474,700
		Increase	<u>528,377</u>

Occasioned by the Rajah of Tanjore's bonds being made payable in England	—	235,198l.
By a sum due on sale of Dutch goods	—	292,974l.
		<u>528,172l.</u>

ASSETS.

At home and afloat, 1 March, 1795,	—	—	10,413,354
No. 23—1 March, 1796	—	—	12,024,312
		Increase this year	<u>1,610,958</u>
Deducting increase of debts above from the increase of assets, the state of affairs at home appears better in 1796, by	—	—	<u>1,082,581</u>

CHINA and St. HELENA.

Balance last year in favour of the Company		979,152
No. 24.—Balance in favour of the Company this year	—	581,174
		<u>397,978</u>
The present balance less		<u>397,978</u>

GENERAL COMPARISON of DEBTS and ASSETS.

Decrease of debts in India	—	—	491,725l.
Increase of debts at home	—	—	528,377l.
		Increase of debts	<u>36,652</u>
Increase of assets in India	—	—	59,665l.
Increase of assets at home	—	—	1,610,958l.
Deduct	—	—	1,670,623l.
Balance at China and St. Helena less	—	—	397,978l.
		Net increase of assets	<u>1,272,645</u>
Deducting increase of debts as above, the general improvement is	—	—	<u>1,235,993</u>

The Indian accounts of this year being nearly of the same date, the improvement is corroborated by the balances of the stock accounts.

Balance of stock by computation last year was	—	5,493,774
No. 24 this year	—	6,734,264
		<u>1,240,490</u>
The Company's affairs better as to debts and assets	—	<u>1,240,490</u>

COMPARISON of ACCOUNTS presented this year, with Estimate on which the arrangement of 1793 was formed.

REVENUES.	Estimate February 1793	Actual 1794-5		Actual Account 1794-5 bet. than estimat.
Bengal, Madras, } and Bombay }	6,963,625	8,026,193	more	1,062,568
Charges of ditto	5,188,125	5,944,445	deduct	756,320
	<u>1,775,500</u>	<u>2,081,748</u>		
Revenues more			more	306,248
Supplies from Ben- gal to Bencoolen, &c. }	50,000	74,857	more	24,857
Interest on debts	561,923	484,301	less	77,622
	<u>611,923</u>	<u>559,158</u>		
Deduct			less than estimate	52,765
Net Revenues	1,163,577	1,522,590	more than estimate	359,013
Receipts from sales of imports and from certificates }	350,000	562,177	more	212,177
Surplus	1,513,577	2,084,767	more than estimate	571,190

The estimated surplus of 1795-6 is 1,795,166l. which exceeds the estimate of 1793 by 281,589l.

SALES and RECEIPTS.

RECEIPTS.	ESTIMATE 1793	ACTUAL 1795-6	
Goods sold	4,988,300	6,191,894	
Profit on private trade	70,000	148,417	
Interest on annuities	36,227	36,227	
	<u>5,094,527</u>	<u>6,376,538</u>	more 1,282,011
PAYMENTS.			
Customs	633,850	677,786	
Freight	690,670	1,250,520	
Goods and stores exported	1,017,000	1,227,632	
Bills of exchange or bullion	644,580	913,290	
Charges merchandize	375,000	634,664	
Interest on bonds and dividends on stock	528,000	722,172	
Indigo contractors	—	10,485	
Teas purchased on the Continent	—	54,492	
	<u>3,889,100</u>	<u>5,491,041</u>	more 1,601,941
Surplus	1,205,427	885,497	
		<u>less</u>	<u>319,930</u>

Having thus concluded his statement of the accounts, Mr. Dundas said, that there were some points upon which it was necessary he should be explicitly understood. Although he had stated that there was a large surplus in the hands of the presidencies in India, yet he begged by no means to have it implied, that he considered the surplus to be one that could be brought into the service of the Company in India, nor such as could be realized in the course of the present year.

Thus, though in the Bengal revenues, all the items would be found to exceed the estimate for the last year, yet in the next and in the year following, some of the articles must naturally be expected to fall short—Opium, in particular, could not be expected, from some circumstances relative to Holland in the progress of the war, to be equally productive; but, he was confident in his hopes, that the exceedings upon the other articles would be sufficient to make up the deficiency upon that.

He should briefly state some of the charges incurred by late regulations, to which a part of the surplus he had stated would naturally be applied. These were incurred to remedy two grievances complained of in the army.

The first was as to the mode of rising peculiar to the India service, by which officers could reach no higher than the rank of Colonel—a circumstance which placed them below the importance of the other troops of these dominions, and which, being admitted to be a grievance that demanded a remedy, could not be remedied without expence.

The second was a circumstance of extreme hardship—namely, that they were deprived of pay when they returned to this country—a measure of great severity and injustice, as it left to the gallant officer, whose generous exertions for the Company's interest had injured his health without benefiting his fortune, no alternative but returning home, totally unprovided for, even by half pay; or staying in the service and retaining his pay, at the price of health, until he parted with pay and life together.

Called upon by humanity, by justice, and by gratitude, such resolutions had been taken as were judged adequate to the remedy of these defects, the redress of these grievances. He did conceive them perfectly becoming our dignity, our honour, and our justice; and he had the satisfaction to know, that they were so felt and received in India—by at least the great body of the persons, whose approbation he considered as valuable.

If in so numerous a body there should be found any of a different spirit, who denied the advantage intended, and reprobated

the measure adopted for their own relief, yet should he not regret the dignity he had given to their service, the advantages he had attached to their retirement. He could never bring himself, on account of prejudice or ingratitude, to repent of having done an act of justice. However his intentions might be distrusted, or his plans estimated, he should pursue them with the same spirit for the welfare of him who objected, as well as of him who supported them. No clamour should ever induce him to depart one step from the path of his public duty, or make him cease to carry into execution a measure of the justice and wisdom of which he was so thoroughly convinced.

These objects would lead to a large expence, and always premising that it could not in its nature be quite accurate, but rating it rather higher than lower than he imagined, it would, abroad and at home, demand a sum of about 500,000*l*. If it should reach this estimate, it was to be observed there would still remain a balance exceeding the surplus by law devoted to the Company's investment, besides the liberty of bringing home in investment whatever they can spare from the revenues of the settlements contrasted with the charges by which they are maintained.

It afforded him the most sincere satisfaction, and it must undoubtedly give equal pleasure to the House, that he was able to exhibit so favourable a view of the affairs of the East-India Company both abroad and at home—a view the more satisfactory, when they remembered those periods when they sat to deliberate on the bankruptcy of that Company, and consider whether by any possible arrangement it could be saved from absolute ruin. Events had now fully justified all his predictions on this subject, and realized those hopes which he long professed to entertain, so contrary to the opinions of some gentlemen, who were always ready to dispute his statements respecting India affairs.

Some of these gentlemen were no longer Members of that House, and therefore could not be opposed to him at present. But the less he expected contradiction, the more accurate it became him to be in his statements. Yet he was not absolutely destitute of all hopes, that some new champion might stand forward and relieve him from the languor of undisputed statement. Reviewing that part of the Company's concerns which fell most immediately within his province to examine, namely, the state of its affairs in India, he was confident in asserting, that it was in an increasing progression of prosperity, and that there was every prospect of this prosperity being yet very considerably augmented.

∴ Their revenues and establishments were settled on a solid and

permanent basis; nor was there any circumstance within the probable scope of events, which was likely to reverse their situation. The apprehensions of insolvency had long since disappeared; and setting out at a certain point of prosperity, the only question was, how far that point may be extended? The war which agitated Europe, did not reach the Company's possessions, nor was it likely so to do with any bad effect: so far, indeed, was this from having happened, that the Company has been enabled to achieve the most splendid and valuable conquests.

There was nothing to disturb their internal security, being upon the most friendly terms with all the other powers of that continent, and treaties were negotiating between them and the Rajah of Travancore as well as with the Rajah of Tanjore, and the Nabob of Arcot; but of their policy and effect, as they were not yet concluded, he would refrain from saying any more at present. With regard to the power and resources of the Company, they were well evinced, as he had already hinted, in the valuable acquisitions of the Cape of Good Hope and the Spice Islands. One of those gentlemen, (Mr. Fox,) who omit no opportunity of declaiming against the present war, and are eternally prancing about the vast expenditure of British blood and treasure, recited, amongst other calamities, as they called it, the acquisition of these most important conquests; a most unhappy illustration! for all the conquests ever made for this country, those, perhaps, in which the least British blood was shed, and the least British money expended, were the Cape of Good Hope and the Eastern Islands. In fact, these settlements had been taken without any other co-operation by the forces of Great Britain than what was given by the fleet, for the troops and the expences of the expedition were furnished by the East-India company. Such, then, was the state of their present situation; and as to their finances and territorial revenues, the statements transmitted to this country were now brought to such a degree of fidelity and accuracy as may be implicitly relied on. This representation, however flattering it may seem, would, he made no doubt, be much exceeded in the periods that were to come. The best proof that could be of the improving strength and prosperity of any country was to be found in its increasing population; and that such was the fact in Bengal appeared from a minute of Sir John Shore, the present Governor-general. Similarly rapid advances, both in revenue and population, were observable in Madras and Bengal. The government of the country was mildly and justly administered, property was secured, persons were respected, industry was encouraged, and the happiness and prosperity

of the people so effectually consulted, that the inhabitants of other countries were glad to remove from their native abodes to reside under the protection of the British government. The most rapid state of improvement in rude and uncultivated minds, must necessarily require some interval before it can operate to any useful extent; and after the lapse of some time, when prejudices shall be removed, and the people of India made capable of understanding and practising that which would tend most to their own advantage, the East-India Company and the public could not fail to participate in the benefits resulting from it.

He had before already remarked, that when first he imposed upon himself the duty of making this annual statement to the House, he confined himself altogether to the situation of the Company abroad, without interfering with those domestic commercial concerns which were left solely under their own management. Having, however, in the year 1793, found it necessary on the subject of renewing their charter, to enter into a review of the whole state of their affairs, he resolved to continue in future regularly the process which he had adopted on a particular occasion. In pursuance of that rule, they had already heard the statement he had to make of the Company's domestic concerns. They had seen how much the sales of the last year, even independent of the Dutch property, exceeded the average at which sales were taken; and they must observe that similar exceedings took place in all other branches of their revenue. The inference therefore was fair, that when the war was over, even supposing we did not retain our new conquests, the sales of the Company would continue to increase. By some means or other it happened, that whatever statements he made upon this subject were sure to be reported very faithfully to the public, and that gave him an advantage which was not always to be obtained—an exemption from being misrepresented, or if misrepresented, there was the less excuse for it. He would therefore appeal to one of those evidences he alluded to for a passage in a former speech of his, and which he read from a paper. The purport of the passage was, expressing an opinion, that from the condition of the enemy, our own naval superiority, and all the circumstances of the contest in which we were engaged, the commerce of the East-India Company was likely to suffer less in the present war than it had done in any former one. Such were his expectations, and the event had realized them. On the broad expanse of the ocean, it was impossible that the vigilance of the navy, however powerful, may not be so eluded as to give the foe an opportunity of committing depredations on a commerce extensive as ours. Yet it so happened, fortunately for the East-India,

Company, and the truth of his predictions, that as far as his information went, not a single East-India ship had been taken by the enemy since the commencement of the war to the present hour.

Was there any reason to suppose, that at the termination of the war the sales and revenues of the East-India Company would diminish? He could divine none, though it seemed in a Court of Proprietors an ignorant or ill-intentioned orator might be found endeavouring to fill the minds of his hearers with apprehensions of unfavourable events, and distrust in the value and state of their concerns. Some such persons would even urge, that the possession of the Cape of Good Hope and the Spice Islands would do to this country more an injury than an advantage. What his opinion of the value of those settlements may be, as far as it influenced the course of a negotiation, this was not the time nor place to express them. But he would not, in passing, scruple to say, that the possession of the Cape was an advantage, which could not easily be calculated to the East-India commerce.

Admitting, however, that those possessions were in the end to be restored, did it follow that we could, for very many years, have any rivals to dread in this most valuable trade? Or that any considerable part of it would be diverted into any neighbouring channel? He saw no reason to think that such a transfer was possible. Even before the present war, the Companies and ships that traded to the Continent of India were greatly on the decline, and their intercourse was in a manner absorbed and lost in the immense commerce of the British Company. France, it was known, had once some share in the trade in India; Holland, before it fell into its present calamitous condition, might more truly be said to have considerable trade with that quarter of the world. But admitting that at this moment they were both restored to the possessions of the territories they held before this contest, there was not the smallest danger of their becoming rivals to Great Britain. France must begin afresh to create trading establishments without having any materials for bringing forward a capital, by which alone a commerce such as this would flourish.

Holland, whose precarious resources are quite exhausted and ruined, could not even carry on her spice trade, as the very ships which conveyed them to the East, became prizes of the British captors. When these impoverished countries, without merchants or marine, were the only rivals that could be thought of, to the established, wealthy, and powerful Company of England, there was little cause to fear that any injurious change was likely to happen in the concerns of the latter. In proof of the opinions which

well-informed persons entertained respecting the returns in future years from the East Indies, he read a letter, in corroboration of his sentiments, addressed to him that morning by Mr. Brown, who was a trader exceedingly conversant with East-India affairs, and the greatest purchaser of any man in Europe at the sales of the Company. By this letter, it appears to be this gentleman's opinion, that the sales of the present year would be as productive as the last. From any competitors, therefore, we could not reasonably be apprehensive, either in our China or India trade. Canton and the Ganges would long continue to furnish their annual contributions to the riches of the Thames.

The only circumstances that could seem at first sight to contradict the integrity of the favourable statement he had made, was the deficiency which appeared in the cash estimates of this year. To account for this, they had only to reflect on the great contingent expenses of the period, which were not likely to occur again to any similar extent. The new military arrangements must produce considerable expenditure, the accounts of which had not yet arrived. But independent of the additional expence which the late regulations must cause in respect to officers, the consequence of the war, and the expeditions, so happily planned and executed, must have occasioned considerable augmentation in the native corps. There was also a number of bonds out for the debts of the Company, great quantities of which were poured in upon them at their sales, and others they thought fit to discharge, lest they should be at a discount. There was, indeed, a variety of circumstances which concurred in producing this deficiency at this particular period. Amongst these was to be mentioned the sum of £24,000l. which, by authority of Parliament, they paid for building a new warehouse, in order to secure their property from the depredations to which it had been formerly exposed.

Though the war, as he before stated, had very little effect upon the commercial security of the Company, yet it was unavoidably productive of considerable expence to them. It was true, he believed, that not a single Indiaman had been taken by the enemy, but still it was impossible for them to persuade or prevail upon those they had to deal with, to conduct their trade at the same rate of freightage as was usual in time of peace; and for that reason they were now at a very heavy expence, which would be saved to them as soon as the happy period of tranquillity should arrive.

Much had been said of this country not having that participation which it had a right to expect in the prosperity of the East-India Company; but he had never promised any more participation than

what had been obtained. It was impossible, that the commerce of the East-India Company could flourish in so great a degree, without the benefits being diffused throughout the whole mass of the people. In fact, the public had received half of the money it was entitled to in the two last years, and in the next it would receive the sum of 500,000*l*. Those embarrassments, the inevitable consequence of particular events, would not return in future years, and he could confidently promise, that the revenues of India would come greatly in aid of the expences of this country. As to the mode of removing some inconveniences arising to the trade, and proposed to be remedied by an extension of their capital, he professed himself friendly to that measure, in preference to the issuing of bonds. There were many disadvantages attending those bonds, debts which might be suddenly poured upon them at a time when it would be difficult or impossible to answer them. Besides, when they were issued to a large amount, they must of course bear a discount, which was by no means to the credit of so very opulent and so very powerful a body. By adding two millions to their capital they would effectually relieve themselves from any necessity for these bonds, and this he would recommend to them to do, even if their debts were out of the question ; for surely it was evident even to the most careless observer, that if their capital in 1793, was no more than sufficient for the purposes of their trade, it must be wholly inadequate to the trade they carry on at present. It was of material consequence to their interests that their commerce should not be confined within too narrow limits, for without the means of supplying the demands in the other markets of Europe after the return of peace, other nations would be tempted to interfere in their trade and, perhaps, injure their monopoly. Many arguments had indeed been frequently brought forward against monopolies in general, and those of the East-India Company in particular ; and it would certainly strengthen the force of these arguments if those to whom the trade was confined, in exclusion of all the rest of the nation, should be unable to supply the demand that was made for it. Nor was it at all to be wondered at that very large sums were required for managing this trade, when it was considered that after goods were shipped from England, four years must elapse before the return for them was deposited in the Company's treasury. Great care should, however, be taken that, at this precise period, the extension of the capital should by no means exceed their immediate necessities. His reasons for this, was one which he wished to be impressed on every holder of India Stock, namely, that at the present price, it would sell infinitely below its value, being now, compared with the last

year of peace, the difference between 174 and 228. He then concluded by moving a string of resolutions founded on his statements.

Mr. BIDDULPH congratulated the House upon finding that the accounts of the East-India Company's affairs were more clear and regular this year than they had formerly been; still he thought them capable of being more so than they were, in order to enable the Members of that House to form those conclusions which should be drawn from them. In order to this, he thought nothing would form so true a basis as presenting an account of the actual rents of the territorial possessions of India. For his part, he could not conceive the affairs of the East-India Company to be so flourishing as had been described. The statements mentioned, that 2,500,000*l.* were annually drawn from the lands in Bengal; but he much doubted whether it was possible for a country possessing no mines, but importing all their metals, to yield any permanent income to that amount. The industry of the inhabitants might go some way towards it, and obviate those destructive circumstances which must otherwise have overwhelmed them in distress; but he could not conceive that such a country could yield a permanent or increasing income under the operation of constant drain, and deprived as it was of opulent families and flourishing Zemindars. He observed, that a variety of deductions were to be made from the sum stated as applicable to the Bengal investitures, which would reduce it from 1,500,000*l.* to 1,000,000*l.* and adverted to the deficiency of the opium sales, the expences of the military establishment, and the increased expence of the new establishment in Bengal for the administration of justice, (a sum which he stated at between 3 and 400,000*l.* a year.) It was his wish, he said, to be informed respecting the nature and extent of the jurisdiction of those Courts, and the nature of the laws imposed upon the inhabitants of that country. He concluded by dissenting from the resolution, so far as any inference was drawn from the statements of the former year.

Mr. DUNDAS said, the resolutions only recorded matters of fact, which were drawn from the accounts now laid upon the table.

Sir FRANCIS BARING believed that the accounts were as accurate as the nature of the case would admit. He said, he had felt some alarm with regard to the army arrangements, and doubted whether the European officers were satisfied with the regulations which had been sent to India; and he also feared, that the permanent settlement of the revenue of the country would produce much

disturbance at some future period. He had formerly been of opinion, that the affairs of the Company, though affected by the war, were more flourishing than he now thought them to be. With regard to the Cape of Good Hope and the Spice Islands, he should be very sorry to have an increased expence on that account. The Cape cost the Dutch annually above 500,000*l*. As to the Spice Islands, he said, if they were not held on the same plan as the Dutch held them, they could never be rendered profitable; and if so held, it must be in a way revolting to the feelings of Englishmen. He thought that if, after the peace, foreigners were encouraged to trade to India, it would be impossible for the East-India Company to supply the wants of this country, or keep up its sales to the present amount.

Sir CHARLES ROUSE BUGHTON said, that as the resolution proposed went only to declare the obvious result of numbers, as deduced from the accounts upon the table of the House, he did not mean to enforce it by argument, nor had he any wish to oppose it: but he desired to say a word upon the idea thrown out by the two honourable gentlemen who spoke last, that our Indian affairs were not likely to continue equally beneficial, and particularly the territorial revenue. This idea must be grounded either upon fact, or reasoning. Now, in point of fact, if we looked back to the most distant periods of history, India had always been a source of wealth to every nation that made conquests in it, or engaged in its trade; the Adriatic conquerors and merchants had derived the same benefits from it; and the events of those times, which fell more immediately within our own observation and inquiry, in the transaction of various European nations, during the two last centuries, fully verified his assertion. Bengal, it was said, had no mines of precious metals; but it had what was more valuable than precious metals, which are only the symbol of wealth, a more sure source of national riches, unremitting industry and ingenuity, supported by a propitious climate, and luxuriant soil. These were what had enabled it to pay to its sovereigns, as far back as public records carry us, a territorial revenue, probably as large, or nearly as large, as it pays now; it has continued to do so ever since the British possession of it: and was there any sound reason to suppose that it would be less able to do so hereafter, when it is growing every day more accustomed to our dominion, more benefited by the improvements of our system, and, above all other considerations put together, when that principle, which is so dear to the feelings of every human heart, is unalterably established by British government, the security of private property, and a fixed revenue; so

that every man may enjoy his possessions, and improve them by his good management, under the certain confidence, that they belong securely to him, and to his children after him ?

With regard to the trade between Europe and India, he saw no reason why Great Britain should not use its enterprize and capital, to the greatest possible degree, in that branch. He conceived, in fact, that for many years past the trade of the other nations of Europe to the East Indies had been but trifling ; and that the cargoes which went under the German, Swedish, Danish, French, and even Dutch colours, were, in a great measure, supported by British capital. If this was the true state of things, and the prosperous events of war had annihilated other European nations in India, and created a chasm, as the right honourable Secretary had well described it, in the intercourse between that country and this, he thought it was our business to fill up the chasm ; and it would be criminal in those who held the administration of Indian affairs not to embrace the opportunity, by bringing that whole trade into the legitimate channel of the East-India Company, under the controul and protection of His Majesty's Ministers and the British Parliament.

The accounts, he said, certainly exhibited a state of prosperity. The public were much indebted to the right honourable gentleman for the annual production of them, formed in such a manner, that every individual who would take the trouble might make himself master of the progressive situation of our Indian revenue, and check the estimate formed in the preceding year, by comparing it with the accounts of the actual year, when it has elapsed, so as to render delusion impossible. And he could not help saying, that, to his apprehension, the set of accounts now on the table contained as perspicuous and satisfactory a statement as ever was produced in any country, of a concern so great and so complicated as the trade and revenues of the East-India Company.

Upon the whole view of the subject, he saw no reason to doubt, that the favourable expectations of the right honourable gentleman might be fulfilled, and that Great Britain might continue, subject only to the contingencies which hang on all human events, to derive the same benefits from its Indian possessions and commerce, he hoped, to all perpetuity.

M. D. SCOTT confirmed the general statement of Mr. Dundas as to the prosperity of India, and the progressive increase of profit upon all the sales. He stated the advantage to be derived from the commerce of Bengal as well as China. Mr. Scott observed, that it cost the Company above a million additional on account of

freight, but, in the event of peace, this would be saved, and consequently a much larger profit would arise upon the sales. Besides, in times of peace, many more markets would be open for disposing of the commodities of India. Mr. Scott declared, he widely differed from the honourable Baronet, who thought we should be better without our possessions in the East. The Cape of Good Hope and the Island of Ceylon, were of the greatest importance, next to the possession of Bengal for securing the Empire of the East. With respect to the Spice Islands, he thought it better that this country should have them than the French, though perhaps it was better that they should be left entirely free.

Mr. HUSSEY contended, that the revenue of India, after the necessary deductions, fell short of the appropriation of a million; nor could he look at the revenues of the Company as increasing, because the estimates of the present year were less than the former. The honourable Secretary had stated, that the debts were lessened, and the assets increased, but this had not been accounted for. He insisted that the Company was now insolvent, as it would turn out, that were all its effects converted into money, it would not have enough to pay off all demands; the former he calculated at 6,734,000*l.* and the latter would amount to 7,780,000*l.*

Mr. DUNDAS contradicted the statement, and shewed that the Company had almost enough to pay their personal debts out of their personal effects, and if to these was added their old property, not only would they be able to pay to the amount of their capital, at the end of their charter, but be a rich society indeed, were they to divide the surplus among them, if, he added, they should be so ill advised as to adopt such a determination. He compared their situation to the case of a gentleman with personal property nearly sufficient to pay his debts, and considerable landed estate. Was he not to be reputed as solvent, because part of his capital was in land? The East-India Company were in possession of a landed estate of above a million a year for the term of seventeen years.

The resolutions were now put and carried, and the report ordered to be received to-morrow.

The bills for amending the Augmentation-militia Act, the Cavalry, and the Army-levy Act, were committed, and the reports ordered to be received on Thursday.

Wednesday, 21st December.

Mr. ELLIOT, the Chairman of the Southwark Committee, appeared at the bar and stated, that the Committee appointed to

try the merits of the petition of George Tierney, Esq. complaining of an undue election and return for the borough of Southwark, had directed him to report their determination to the House, which was as follows :

That G. W. Thellusson is not duly elected a burgher to serve in this present Parliament for the said Borough of Southwark.

And also, that the said Select Committee have determined,

That George Tierney, Esq. the petitioner, ought to have been returned a burgher, to serve in Parliament for the said borough.

And also, that the said Select Committee have determined,

That the said George Tierney, Esq. is duly elected a burgher, &c. to serve in Parliament for the said borough.

And also, that the said Select Committee have determined,

That the petition of the said George Tierney, Esq. did not appear to the said Select Committee to be frivolous or vexatious.

And also, that the said Select Committee have determined,

That the opposition of the said G. W. Thellusson to the said petition, did not appear to the said Select Committee to be frivolous or vexatious.

The report was brought up.

Mr. ELLIOT then moved, that the Clerk of the Crown do attend the House to-morrow to amend the return of the said election ; and that, instead of the name of G. W. Thellusson, Esq. be substituted that of George Tierney, Esq.—Ordered.

The Cape of Good Hope Navigation Bill was brought in and read a first time. Ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

The report of the Committee on the papers from the India House was brought up, and the resolutions agreed to by the House.

Mr. ABBOT said, that having brought up the Report from the Committee, appointed to consider of the best means of promulgating the statutes, he now rose to give notice that he should take an early opportunity after the recess, to propose to the House some measure founded on the facts contained in that Report.

The Scots Distillery bill was read a third time and passed. The House in a Committee of Supply, among other sums, voted a sum of 540,000*l.* for the relief of the suffering Clergy and Laity of France. The report ordered to be received to-morrow, and the Committee to sit again on Friday.

In a Committee of Ways and Means, approved of the resolutions relative to the terms of the loan.

In a Committee on the bill for the more speedy payment of Navy, Transport and Victualling bills,

Mr. HUSSEY objected to the regulations of the Bill, which in his opinion would not enable the public to go to the market with advantage; but would, on the contrary, have the effect to encourage injurious speculation.

Mr. Chancellor PITT explained the nature of the bill. All that it enacted was, that a Navy Bill should not run more than three months. The interest was calculated as nearly as possible at the rate of five per cent.; from the best information he could obtain he had reason to believe that the mode of payment proposed by the present bill would be perfectly agreeable to the parties concerned.

Mr. HUSSEY persisted in his objections. The bill was read a first and second time, and agreed to by the Committee, and the report ordered to be received to-morrow.

Mr. BIDDULPH said, that he had last night proposed some questions with respect to the new system of India Judicature, in answer to which he could obtain no satisfactory information. He wished some account of the institution to be laid before the House, and if Ministers persisted to decline bringing forward the subject, he would make a motion for the purpose.

Mr. Chancellor PITT suggested the difficulty of complying with the wishes of the honourable gentleman, from the complicated and extensive nature of the subject.

Mr. BIDDULPH enforced the importance of obtaining satisfactory information with respect to an object which interested no less than fifteen millions of people. Several new codes of criminal law had lately been brought forward, in all of which the severity of former enactments had been considerably mitigated. He was desirous to ascertain whether the same mild and equitable spirit had been followed in the regulations of this new code of India Judicature. Since he could not obtain from Ministers an account of the institution, he gave notice that he should to-morrow make a motion. That there be laid upon the table copies of the correspondence between the Governor-General of Bengal, and the Board of Control, relative to the new Courts of India Judicature, previous to such Courts being instituted.

Thursday, 22d December.

GEORGE TIERNEY, Esq. took the oath and his seat for the borough of Southwark.

Mr. NICHOLLS gave notice, that early after the holidays he should move for leave to bring in a bill to prevent persons voting

at elections of Members to serve in Parliament, by virtue of collusive and fictitious transfers for burgage tenures, &c.

Mr. BIDDULPH said, he was about to proceed to make the motion of which he gave notice yesterday—for the production of some papers relative to the establishment of Courts of Judicature in India. This he conceived to be matter of general concern, for he thought that the mode of administering justice under the authority of this country in all parts of the globe, ought to be fully known and submitted to the approbation of that House. The motion, which he held in his hand, was calculated for that object, and he should be under the necessity of persisting in making it, unless the information which he should receive from the Secretary of State, now in the House, should answer the purpose which he had in view of the subject before the House. He understood that there were at present in India Courts of Criminal Justice under the authority of our Government, and where the Judges presided. He understood that in India the criminal laws had been made milder than they were formerly, and that in many cases the punishment of death was not inflicted for crimes which had been forbidden under that penalty in former cases. If the matter was so, he thought the House could not do better than to consider what had been the effect of such mildness; and if they found that the morals of the people were better in consequence of the alteration, they ought, in policy, as well as humanity, to make that mildness a general system in that part of the globe; instead of containing the old and barbarous system of inflicting death for crimes which could be better prevented without it. With a view of bringing important information before the House upon a subject so interesting, and, perhaps, hereafter of suggesting some regulations, he should move,

“ That there be laid before this House, copies, or extracts, of the orders of the Court of Directors of the East-India Company to the Governor-general and Council of Fort William, for establishing new Courts of Criminal Justice in the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, and of the Directions that have been given for the proceedings of the said Courts.”

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, that the honourable gentleman who introduced this motion, alluded to the subject on a former night; he had observed, that the House of Commons could not be so well employed as in forming a code of criminal laws for India. If he had any idea of that kind in his mind, he must observe to him, that of all the subjects on which that House could be

employed, the most pernicious on which they could exercise their authority would be that of forming a code of criminal jurisdiction over our territories in India. The whole of the Executive Government there was subject to a Board of Control, which Board was subject again to Parliament, and if any thing improper was done, Parliament would of course exercise its authority. But he must enter his solemn protest against Parliament taking up the matter, and forming all at once a code of criminal laws for that distant country. If the House could be rash enough to enter upon such a scheme, he would venture to say they would soon find themselves in a labyrinth, out of which it would be difficult, if not impossible, for them to extricate themselves. Codes of laws for a whole people were not to be formed at once from notions of dry and abstract propriety; they should be adapted to the feelings and the prejudices of those on whom they were designed to operate; and if the House should take such a matter into their discussion without great caution, they might perplex, entangle, and perhaps destroy the Government of India. The honourable gentleman, although he might have great general knowledge, was however but a young Member of Parliament. He should be given to understand, that it was not a practice of the House to grant any papers which any Member chused to call for, merely because he chused it; the House generally expected some ground to be stated for the propriety of granting papers, before they granted them. It would therefore be sufficient for him in resisting this motion, to insist that no ground had been laid before the House to shew the necessity of granting these papers. Besides this objection, there was another which the honourable gentleman had, perhaps, overlooked; it might be impossible to comply with this motion. All those who had occasion to peruse India documents must be convinced that they do not write in a very laconic style. The whole of the correspondence which the honourable gentleman asked for might be so voluminous as to employ for a long time all the clerks of the India Company to copy them; and here again the expence of the measure offered itself to view, and that he would venture to say would not be a mere trifle. The Company must maintain double their present establishment, if they were to furnish such a body of writing for any other than the most useful purposes.

He admitted, that material changes had taken place in the administration of justice in India, under the government of the Marquis Cornwallis, 1790, and 1792. Formerly, the collectors of the revenue were the judges in all questions of revenue; the Marquis Cornwallis had separated the character of Judge from that of party.

In the criminal code, he had relieved the country from the oppression of some prejudices which had continued longer than in other parts of the world. He had put an end to assassination, by abolishing pecuniary compensation for murder—a practice which had existed in all countries under the feudal system, and even till a late period in our own. He had made no change in the fundamental laws of India, but put their execution on grounds better suited to the principles of the people and to the religion of the place. Mr. Dundas said, that he had often wished the House to be more minutely acquainted with the good conduct of the noble Marquis in this particular; and, if the honourable gentleman would withdraw his motion, he gave his honour to bring forward another that should answer the purpose of laying before the House such information as they could want on the subject.

Mr. BIDDULPH replied, he had no objection to withdraw his motion, upon the promise of Mr. Dundas to bring the subject forward. He should not have brought it forward, if he had not thought the alterations had been weakly and wickedly adopted.

Mr. Chancellor PITT thought, that as the honourable gentleman had founded his motion upon the weakness or wickedness of the measures which had been pursued, his motion ought to be read, in order that, from the nature of it, the House might judge how far his diligence and investigation of the subject justified his using those words.

Mr. BIDDULPH explained.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, that the words neither applied to the Board of Control nor to the Directors of the East-India Company, but to the acts of Parliament relative to India.

Sir CHARLES ROUSE BOUGHTON thought it was incumbent upon him to offer a few short observations, because he had, in a former Parliament, taken an active part in measures immediately connected with the motion now before the House. The manner in which the honourable Member had made and explained his motion, tended to excite apprehensions and alarm, both in the House, and amongst the public, that there was a shameful capriciousness and versatility in the conduct of this country towards the inhabitants of our India possessions, and that the system of criminal law were made and changed at pleasure, which he believed to be foreign from the truth. After noticing in a way that seemed to make much impression upon the House, the wide distinction between a legislative arrangement, as incident to every governing country, and a positive code of law, which was the term repeatedly used and insisted upon by Mr. Biddulph; he said, he would ven-

ture to assert, beyond the possibility of contradiction, that the British nation had, in no period of its possession, ever formed a code of laws for the people of India: and in regard to the criminal law, which was the particular subject of the present charge, we had been more especially cautious in interfering in it. He did not know what knowledge the honourable gentleman may have brought from India, if he has been there; but he certainly had not acquired the knowledge to be gained at home from a perusal of the proceedings of Parliament; which would demonstrate, that neither the Legislature itself, nor any local authority had ever ventured to tamper with the criminal jurisprudence of India. First, he begged to refer to the reports of the Committee of Secresy, printed in the year 1773, in all which there was a great variety of valuable matter, but to those more particularly which related to the judicature of Bengal; and there would be found a minute description of the several officers employed in expounding and adjudging the penal laws of the country, such as they were established under the Mogul Government, and continued under ours, but no mention of any new penal code. This was in 1772 and 3. From that period he passed to the year 1781, when the administration of justice in Bengal was specially brought under the cognizance of Parliament: and it might be remembered, that he was then one of the first to alarm the House, by stating to them the vexations which had arisen to the natives of India from an infringement of their ancient laws and usages, by an extension of the criminal process of England, as enforced over them by the Judges of His Majesty's Supreme Court. To the very ample discussion of that subject, which then took place, he brought, for his own part, all the local knowledge he had acquired in India, all he could derive from a careful study of books, and all the assistance he could obtain from men more enlightened than himself. The inquiry was pursued, a laborious report was laid before Parliament, generally called the Judicature Report, in which the functionaries of the Mahomedan law are again described, whose persons had lately been disgraced, and jurisdiction destroyed: and the final result of the whole proceeding was, that Parliament, with all that information before them, wisely, in his opinion, passed a law to restrain the powers assumed by His Majesty's Judges, and secure to the natives the undisturbed enjoyment and exercise of their own laws, usages, and religion. There was not even a question about modelling or altering their laws. The design of all parties was to protect them from infringement.

So far as to the authority of Parliament. But he would go a step farther, and remark, how far this principle had been followed

up by the Board of Controul, under whom he had the honor of holding for many years a very respectable situation, (Chief Secretary,) and therefore knew the measures they had pursued. When that Board framed their plans for the future government of our territorial possessions in India, they directed their views to all the official details, to the establishment of a fair revenue, to the mode of collecting it, to the freedom of commerce, to the general ease of the people, the security of property and inheritance, and equal promotion of justice. But they never touched upon the criminal law of the country. They left it as they found it. They did more; they declared expressly against a violation of it. So that in every period, although the administrative regulations may have varied, the body of the law has remained the same.

He did not mean, however, to prevent the production of the papers called for, nor to restrain in any degree the general and constant superintendence of Parliament over the affairs of India. Far from it: he considered that as the best preservative of our possessions. But he could never think Parliament would do well in employing its time, as has been suggested, to form a code of laws for India. They were incompetent to such an undertaking; instead of advancing the purposes of justice, it would cause much discontent and oppression: it would lead into a labyrinth, where the House, and the public too, would be bewildered; and, most of all, a code of criminal law. He thought the House would deserve the imputation of "weakness and wickedness," and absurdity, if they attempted it. He wished to speak with all due deference to the wisdom of the House, and begged their excuse for having said so much; to which he had been led by a desire to vindicate the public character as to what is past, and to guard the House from the hazard of doing much mischief by an overstrained solicitation to do good.

Mr. NICHOLLS wished that the motion should be withdrawn.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that, unless the assertions, which had been made by the honourable mover in the course of the debate, could also be withdrawn, he should insist on the motion being put, it order to its receiving the negative of the House.

The motion was put and negatived—and

Mr. BIDDULPH gave notice he would, early after the holidays, bring forward a motion to the same effect as this, although different in form.

Mr. HOBART brought up the report of the Committee of Supply.

The resolutions were all read and agreed to.

Mr. HOBART then brought up the report of the bill to provide for the better payment of navy and victualling bills.

The amendments being read,

Mr. HUSSEY said, that his idea was that articles for which these bills were to be given should, if possible, be paid for in ready money. But if that could not be done, the best way would be to take care that these bills should not go for more than three months in reality. He knew they would be so in appearance; but in reality they would be otherwise. If these bills were issued immediately for the payment of the goods, all would be well: but he desired to know whether discretion was not to be given to Ministers to issue bills, not immediately after the purchase of the articles for which they were to be given, but at a future time? If so, the advantages of making them payable in three months after their issue would be a very vague one.

Mr. Chancellor PITT reminded him of the explanation which he had on the preceding night given him. The payment in navy or transport bills was made in such a manner, as to satisfy the party concerned, and at as early a day as he could, in the course of his trade, receive it from others. The object of the bill now before the House was to provide that no paper, of so long a date as to be liable to discount, should be negotiated, and this had no connection with the time at which the paper was issued, but with the term which it had to run. The length of credit depended on the custom of each particular trade.

Mr. HUSSEY said, he understood the right honourable gentleman now upon this subject, although he did not understand him on a former occasion; and there were many other gentlemen in the same condition at that time, for they did not understand him. This bill had not his consent, now he understood it; because he was persuaded, that whatever may be the good intentions of the Minister, they would be defeated in the market. He could not be able to buy the articles upon the same advantageous terms as if he issued the bills immediately payable at three months; instead of issuing them three months afterwards.

The amendments were then read and agreed to, and the bill was ordered to be engrossed, and read a third time to-morrow, if then engrossed.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he meant to-day to renew a motion which he had made in the last Parliament, for leave to bring in a bill for the better Support and Maintenance of the Poor. He did not intend at present to go at length into any explanation of the

bill, except there should be gentlemen who might be desirous in the present stage to be more particularly informed as to the details of the measure. He would only generally remark, that the bill was directed to the same objects which he had last year stated, and which had then experienced the most decided approbation of the House. The subject itself was so extensive, that it could only be properly discussed at a more advanced stage, when the whole of the details were before the House. At present he only proposed, that the bill should be read a first and second time, that it might go into a Committee, where the blanks should be filled up, and the bill printed before the holidays, in order that during the interval of Parliament it might be circulated in the country, and undergo the most serious and mature investigation. He should, therefore, now move, "That leave be given to bring in a bill for the better Support and Maintenance of the Poor." There was no subject which more deserved the attention of the House, or which required a more careful and deliberate consideration.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, he certainly agreed that there was no subject which was more deserving of the attention of the House, or which more demanded their most diligent and serious investigation. He hoped, however, that the right honourable gentleman would persevere in maturing his system, as he had taken the subject out of the hands of an honourable friend of his (Mr. Whitbread), who would have prosecuted it, if not with equal ability, yet with equal zeal, and, perhaps, with a greater degree of industry. He wished that the right honourable gentleman had at least entered into a short explanation of the particulars of the plan which he now proposed to bring forward. When he talked of the approbation given to the objects of the bill, he ought to have recollected that sanction had been given in a former Parliament. He would, however, when the subject was brought forward in detail, pay it the closest attention, and he trusted that it would be attended with the utmost advantage to the class of the community for whose interests it was professedly brought forward.

Mr. JOLLIFFE said, that as the subject was of infinite importance, and required the most deliberate investigation, he hoped that the bill would not be brought into a Committee, previous to the Christmas recess.

Mr. Chancellor PITT denied having taken the measure out of the hands of the honourable gentleman (Mr. Whitbread); on the contrary, the bill which he now proposed to be brought in was contrived on a much more enlarged scale, which, when put in execution, would supersede the necessity of the other. The honourable

gentleman's proposition was to take some steps for the relief of the labouring poor by regulating the rate of wages ; the plan which he had in view, if properly executed, would render that relief unnecessary. He had been reproached with want of industry in prosecuting it. A person who had it in his power to devote the whole of his attention solely to that object, might certainly have made greater progress in the business. But he believed it was very well known to several gentlemen that he had been by no means idle. In the interval which had elapsed he had exerted himself in circulating the heads of the former bill, in consequence of which he had obtained from several quarters of the country additional information upon the subject. It was an object indeed of so great moment, that he should have been quite ashamed had he been conscious of any remissness in pursuing it. He did not open his plan upon the present evening because he hoped soon to be able to present it to the House in a much more digested shape, and because he was averse to add one unnecessary speech to the many necessary ones, which from his situation he was often obliged to make, and to those which the observations on the other side of the House extorted from him much against his inclination. He wished that the bill should be committed before Christmas, and for the very reason which the honourable gentleman under the gallery (Mr. Jolliffe) was for deferring it till after the holidays, namely, that gentlemen might be in full possession of his plan in detail, and that they might be enabled to collect additional information upon it during their stay in the country, so that the bill might be afterwards recommitted and corrected.

Mr. SHERIDAN reminded the right honourable gentleman that the bill which his honourable friend (Mr. Whitbread) moved for leave to bring in, referred not to a detached measure which he had in view, but was a part of an extensive plan which he then had in agitation, if the House had permitted him to prosecute it.

Mr. MARTIN expressed his satisfaction at finding the Chancellor of the Exchequer in earnest in the business, and he had no doubt that a plan formed by his great abilities, with the benevolent design of granting relief to the labouring poor, would meet the unanimous support of the House.

The report of the amended bill for augmenting the militia was taken into farther consideration, and the different amendments were agreed to by the House.

Mr. Chancellor PITT brought up a clause, providing that no person who shall be balloted for the supplemental militia, shall be liable to serve in the regular militia, which was agreed to.

Mr. WILBERFORCE brought up a clause, providing that the words, "I swear that I am a Protestant," shall be erased from the form of oath administered to those who shall be balloted to serve in the Supplemental Militia.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that it might easily be supposed that he rose to approve of, not to object, to the clause; he reminded the House, however, that he had proposed it as an amendment to the former bill, and that it was rejected. He did not see why the honourable gentleman should give his assent to any proposition when it came from one side of the House more than from the other.

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied, that so far from objecting to the amendment because it came from the honourable gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) he should have assented to it with the greater pleasure on that account, because he had it so seldom in his power to agree with any good thing coming from that quarter.

Mr. SHERIDAN rose, and retorted that the right honourable gentleman had certainly forgotten, for if he would recollect himself he would find that he had frequently taken very valuable hints from him.

The clause was agreed to, and the bill was ordered to be read a third time to-morrow, if then engrossed.

A message was received from the Lords acquainting the House that their Lordships had agreed to the loan bill without any amendment.

Mr. SHERIDAN asked, whether it was the intention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to abandon the duty on inland navigation? He put the question because the Committee on the bill was postponed till after Christmas, and he frequently found that long delays of this kind were only a prelude to the total abandonment of the honourable gentleman's measures.

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied, that he had no intention to abandon the measure, on the contrary, he thought it a fair subject for taxation, and he was convinced that the more it was considered the less it would be objected to.

The report of the Committee on the amended Cavalry Bill was taken into farther consideration, and the different amendments agreed to by the House.

Mr. WILBERFORCE brought up a clause for amending the words of the oath, similar to that which he proposed upon the former bill, which was adopted.

Friday, 23d December.

In a Committee of Supply, the sum of 600,000*l.* in Exchequer bills was voted for the relief of the merchants and planters of Grenada.

After several clauses had been received into the bill for amending the Augmentation-militia Act,

Mr. JOLIFFE, on the question for the third reading, said, that the whole tendency of the act thus to be amended, and of the two others lately passed, for increasing the military and naval forces, was so unconstitutional, their effect would be so oppressive, and their operation so difficult, that he should, after the recess, avail himself of the clause which makes the repeal of them practicable during the session, to move that they be absolutely repealed.

The bill was then read a third time.

Mr. Chancellor PITT introduced a clause into the Cavalry Bill, permitting persons who could not immediately obtain substitutes to serve part of their time in their own persons, and the other part by substitutes, when they could obtain them; which condition, he observed, would prevent persons from being imposed upon, as to price, by those willing to become substitutes.

Mr. Alderman LUSHINGTON wished that the bill should not be passed till to-morrow, when he meant to propose a clause to exempt Postmasters who let out horses for hire from the operation of the bill, because they paid so heavy taxes already to Government.

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied, that he had no objection to postpone the passing of the bill, but he was by no means clear that Postmasters should be exempted from its operation, considering it to be as fair that it should fall upon those who kept horses for profit, as upon those who kept horses for convenience.

A number of clauses were brought up by way of riders to the bill, and the debate upon the last was adjourned till to-morrow, to give Mr. Lushington an opportunity of preparing his clause.

Saturday, 24th December.

The bill for regulating the trade to the Cape of Good Hope was read a third time and passed.

General TARLETON said, that as it was understood that the recess would go beyond the period first proposed, he should move, that a motion of his right honourable friend (Mr. Fox), which was fixed for Monday the 13th of February, should be altered to Monday the 20th.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he should avail himself of this opportunity to give notice to the House, that in consequence of the decisive manner, in which the negotiation in which His Majesty was engaged had terminated, an event which all, no doubt, would lament, he believed that it was His Majesty's intention upon Monday to send down a message, along with some very important communications, upon the subject. He could have wished that there had been a fuller attendance than could now be expected, but it was impossible, from the nature of the case, that any earlier intimation of this event could have been made. As it would be impossible for the House to form any judgement upon the intended communication till they had perused the documents with which it was to be accompanied, it was his intention that they should be printed, that gentlemen might be enabled to make themselves acquainted with the subject, and as early a day as possible should be appointed for taking the message into consideration; and for this purpose he conceived that Thursday might be fixed. Although this important occurrence might postpone for a few days the intended adjournment, he did not think that it would be necessary to give it up altogether.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that he lamented the manner in which the negotiation had terminated, as much as any man. He was surprised, however, to hear from the right honourable gentleman, that there was nothing in this circumstance to prevent the intended adjournment. He could not take it entirely for granted, that in this transaction no blame was imputable to Ministers. There might be gentlemen in the House who would conceive it their duty to move for an inquiry into causes by which the failure of the negotiation was occasioned. He therefore could not think it right for Parliament to adjourn, as if no such event had taken place. In the present thin attendance, he conceived, that it would be proper to move for a call of the House. It would neither be fit nor decent to separate, as if no such occurrence had happened. He wished that a motion should be made for a call of the House, to obtain such an attendance as the magnitude of the subject required.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he had stated, merely as a matter of opinion, founded upon an acquaintance with circumstances, of which other gentlemen were not in possession, that there was nothing to prevent the intended adjournment. He hoped that gentlemen would suspend their judgement, and abstain from taking any steps, till the subject was laid before them, till they obtained that information that would enable them to judge of the propriety of any particular mode of acting; then they might propose such mea-

tures as they conceived necessary. He did not feel that it was proper to say more at present. Gentlemen would decide for themselves, when they had it in their power to examine the circumstances. There was merely a notice, and in itself something irregular, that a communication would be made; and he had been induced to state so much, from a wish to give gentlemen as early information as possible.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that it was merely the right honourable gentleman's opinion, that there was nothing to prevent the adjournment; for his part, he conceived that there must be strong reasons against such a measure, and why Parliament should not separate. He still was of opinion that a call of the House ought to take place; but he should wave any motion on the subject till Monday.

The bill for prolonging the period for the payment of the instalments, on the sums advanced to the merchants of Grenada, went through a Committee of the whole House, and the House being resumed, the report was ordered to be received on Monday.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that in consequence of what he had heard from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he should forbear doing any thing relative to the call of the House till Thursday.

The amended Cavalry Bill, with certain clauses, brought up by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was passed.

The amended County Quota Bill was read a third time and passed.

Monday, 26th December.

Mr. W. DUNDAS presented a petition from Mr. Alexander Morris, stating, that for his neglecting to obey a summons from the Committee to try the merits of a petition, complaining of an undue election for the borough of Southwark, he had been for a considerable time confined in His Majesty's jail of Newgate, by order of that House. He expressed his contrition for the offence he had committed; and after representing that the expences already incurred by him in this affair were more than his deranged circumstances could afford, he prayed for such relief as the clemency of the House might think proper to exercise in his behalf.

Mr. W. Dundas then moved, that the said Alexander Morris should be called to the bar of the House to-morrow, for the purpose of being discharged. It was, he thought, unnecessary for him to take up the time of the House in recommending it to accede to his motion. It appeared by the petition just laid on the table, that Alexander Morris was sensible of his error, and threw himself upon the mercy of the House. As he had thus confessed his offence, and

submitted to the House, he therefore hoped the House would consent to restore him to his liberty.

Mr. GREY said, he should not oppose the motion. He trusted the measures which had been adopted by the House with respect to Morris, would be attended with a proper effect upon others on similar occasions. He alluded to his having, on a former night, moved for the attendance of other persons at the bar, whom he had stated to be the instigators of Morris. He, however, thought that the punishment inflicted on Morris would so strongly mark the determination of the House to enforce the attendance of witnesses before their Committees, and to punish those who refused to attend, that no person would in future be found hardy enough to repeat the offence; for this reason he consented to the motion.

The question was then put and carried, and the Speaker ordered to issue his warrant accordingly.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS delivered a message from His Majesty, of which the following is a copy :

GEORGE R.

It is with the utmost concern that His Majesty acquaints the House of Commons, that his earnest endeavours to effect the restoration of peace have been unhappily frustrated, and that the negotiation in which he was engaged has been abruptly broken off, by the peremptory refusal of the French Government to treat—except upon a basis evidently inadmissible—and by their having in consequence required His Majesty's Plenipotentiary to quit Paris within forty-eight hours.

“ His Majesty has directed the several memorials and papers which have been exchanged in the course of the late discussion, and the account transmitted to His Majesty of its final result, to be laid before the House.

From the papers His Majesty trusts it will be proved to the whole world, that his conduct has been guided by a sincere desire to effect the restoration of peace—on principles suited to the relative situation of the Belligerent powers—and essential for the permanent interests of his kingdoms, and the general security of Europe—whilst his enemies have advanced pretensions at once inconsistent with those objects, unsupported even on the grounds on which they were professed to rest, and repugnant both to the system established by repeated treaties, and to the principle and practice which have hitherto regulated the intercourse of independent nations.

In this situation His Majesty has the consolation of reflecting, that the continuance of the calamities of war can be imputed only to the unjust and exorbitant views of his enemies; and His Majesty, looking

forward, with anxiety, to the moment when they may be disposed to act on different principles, places, in the mean time, the fullest reliance, under the protection of Providence, on the wisdom and firmness of his Parliament, on the tried valour of his forces by sea and land, and on the zeal, public spirit, and resources of his kingdom, for vigorous and effectual support, in the prosecution of a contest which it does not depend on His Majesty to terminate, and which involves in it the security and permanent interests of this country, and of Europe.

G. R.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS observed, that when the House was first informed of the intention of His Majesty to send a message on the subject of the failure of the negotiation for peace with France, it was at the same time intimated that certain papers and documents necessary for the more clear elucidation of the subject, should be laid before the House at the same time the message was delivered. It had, however, on farther consideration, been thought more proper to present those papers to-morrow; they would, therefore, be laid before the House to-morrow, and he had no doubt would furnish such information as would enable the House to form a decisive conclusion as to the causes of the failure of the negotiation. He then moved, that His Majesty's message should be taken into consideration on Thursday next.

Mr. GREY observed, that the information communicated by His Majesty's message, was of a nature truly serious: he, however, did not mean at present to anticipate the discussion of an event, which, however, individually, he might have been led to expect, was certainly an event unlooked for, and unexpected by the nation at large: the discussion of an event big with such alarming consequences, he could entertain no desire to anticipate, until every necessary information was laid before the House; his inducement to rise was, the right honourable Secretary's having proposed to take the message into consideration so early as Thursday. Mr. Grey said, he wished to suggest, whether as the communication had been made at a time when it was so little expected, and when so many Members were absent, it would not be more prudent to allow some farther time before it was taken into consideration, than merely until Thursday next. He felt indubitably, that every Member of Parliament ought at all times to be attending to his duty, but the necessity of relaxation, particularly at this season of the year, had called a number of gentlemen into the country, who would certainly not have absented themselves, had they not conceived, that the aspect of affairs relative to the negotiation by no means threatened

the melancholy news just announced. He therefore hoped that His Majesty's Ministers would be induced to, grant some farther delay before the discussion took place. He admitted that such a delay as could be granted at this time, would hardly produce any very great attendance, and he therefore wished the matter to be adjourned till a full attendance of all the Members could be obtained; but if that could not be acceded to, even the delay of a few days would be the means of having a fuller attendance than could possibly be expected at so short a period as Thursday. It appeared to him, that to postpone the discussion till Monday would be attended with no material impediment, and he trusted would not appear any ways disrespectful towards His Majesty. With respect to the papers, which were to have accompanied the message, not being produced till to-morrow, Mr. Grey said, if they had been produced, he should have wished that they might have been read by the Clerk, in order that the House might have been in possession of such information as they contained. He conceived, that on a subject, in his opinion as important as any which has occurred in the period of our history, it was his duty to require a short delay: considering the melancholy situation to which the country was already reduced, and considering the circumstance of the country's being still menaced with continuation of the calamities of war, he should put it to the candour of His Majesty's Ministers, whether they ought to object to the amendment he should offer to the House upon the right honourable Secretary's motion. His amendment was, that Monday next be substituted for Thursday next.

The amendment being put,

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, it was impossible for him to concur in the proposed amendment. He agreed that there should be a relaxation from the duties of that House; but the same reason which would induce the House to grant that relaxation, must lead them to wish that gentlemen should not be unnecessarily detained. But he should put that consideration out of view upon the present occasion, because points more pressing were now before the House; it was very seldom, indeed, that a message from His Majesty had been delayed in its consideration more than a day; it was usual to give it precedence of all other business, and to consider it the next day. Since such was the practice, he was confident the House would not delay this matter for a single hour more than was indispensably necessary.

The honourable gentleman said, he wished to hear the papers referred to read at the table of the House to-night; he owned he thought, that if the papers had been brought to the House before

they were printed, and read, as the honourable gentleman wished, that circumstances would have retarded the desired information; because it would have retarded the printing; whereas by the mode which Ministers had adopted, the papers would be put into the hands of the Members to-morrow. It did not occur to him that there was any necessity for the present amendment; the consideration of the whole message might stand for Thursday. If the honourable gentleman, after perusing all the papers, should be of opinion on Thursday, that farther time was necessary to consider the message, he might propose merely to thank His Majesty for his gracious communication, and move to defer the consideration of it to any future day to which the House would assent, if it thought itself imperfectly informed upon the matter; for his own part, he was of opinion that the information contained in the papers, would appear so clear and so satisfactory, that the House would not consider any delay necessary. But whatever the decision of the House should ultimately be with respect to the conduct His Majesty's Ministers had pursued, he wished the decision to be given without hesitation, without pause. He was confident the result would prove to the House, and to all Europe, that the ill success of the negotiation was attributable only to the conduct of our enemies.

Mr. WHITBREAD concurred with Mr. Grey in the propriety of delaying the discussion of the subject. He was of opinion the thanks of the House might be voted, and time taken to consider the subject in general. He differed from the right honourable Secretary as to the propriety of coming to a decision without pause or hesitation; he thought it was highly improper, when so many Members were in the country, to come to a decision on a subject, the most important that could occupy the attention of the Commons of Great Britain. He, therefore, recommended to the House to agree to the amendment.

Mr. GREY said, he did not wish to put any unnecessary difficulty in the way as to expressing the thanks of the House to His Majesty. If it were convenient, instead of waiting till Thursday, he had no objection to the House voting thanks to His Majesty immediately. He understood that His Majesty's message referred to certain papers, from which the House was to form an opinion relative to the subject of the negotiation, and was to be called on Thursday next to deliver that opinion, although the papers were not to be laid before the House till to-morrow. It was on that point he stated the necessity of some delay, and not with regard to the propriety of delaying the vote of thanks to His Majesty. He agreed with the right honourable Secretary, that when the House was to

come to a decision upon an important subject, dispatch, resolution, and determination, were good things; but he, at the same time, thought that, with regard to a measure on which the lives of so many millions and so much treasure depended, caution and deliberate discussion were much more material.

Mr. NICHOLLS saw no reason why the amendment should not be adopted, nor did he see any thing that could be more respectful to his Majesty than deliberation.

The question was then put, and the amendment was negatived, and the original motion put and carried.

Thursday, 27th December.

The order of the day for Alexander Morris to be brought to the bar, in order to be discharged, being moved, he was ordered to be brought to the bar.

Alexander Morris being accordingly brought to the bar, the Speaker addressed him as follows:

“ Alexander Morris,

*“ You are now brought to the bar of this House, by virtue of
“ an order made in consequence of your petition, expressing your
“ contrition for the offence of which you have been guilty: an
“ offence involving in it a breach of the privileges of this House,
“ and aggravated by the consideration that it tended to obstruct
“ and embarrass the proceedings, and to defeat the purposes of pub-
“ lic justice. The measures which a just regard for their own dig-
“ nity has induced the House to adopt upon the present occasion,
“ cannot fail to have convinced you and others, if others there
“ are to whom such an admonition could be wanting, that this
“ House is possessed of ample and effectual means of enforcing
“ obedience to its orders, or of punishing those who may presump-
“ tuously endeavour to elude or to resist them. Having, in the
“ punishment which has been already inflicted upon you by the
“ justice of the House, felt the weight of that authority, which
“ you rashly ventured to disregard, you are now to experience their
“ lenity in the effect which they have been pleased to give to your
“ petition, by their determination that your punishment should
“ cease. It is, therefore, my duty, in obedience to the commands
“ of the House, to communicate to you their resolution, that you
“ be discharged out of custody, and you are discharged, paying
“ your fees.”*

The business relative to Morris being finished,

Mr. Canning brought up the declaration of His Majesty, dated

Westminster, Sept. 27, 1796, which upon the motion of Mr. Grey was read and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. CANNING said, that with the utmost diligence which could be employed it had been found impossible to have the papers connected with His Majesty's message ready to be laid before the House till to-morrow ; he therefore rose to move that the order for taking His Majesty's message into consideration on Thursday, should be read, in order to its being discharged and renewed for Friday.

Mr. GREY said, that he had repeatedly urged the request for some interval of delay, in order that the House should have an opportunity of coming to a decision upon a matter of so much importance, after the most mature deliberation. After the confident manner in which it had yesterday, and on a previous occasion, been stated, that the papers necessary to enable gentlemen to form their judgement would be ready for delivery this day, the House might now entertain some doubt whether they would be laid upon the table in time to allow them to prepare for the discussion. The honourable gentleman had stated, that the utmost diligence had been used to have these papers ready to be laid before the House, but though he did not mean to call in question what the honourable gentleman personally asserted, the declaration in his hand induced him to think that they might have been ready to be laid before the House sooner. The declaration referred to the papers which were expected, and must have been composed from the materials they afforded, and it had been printed this morning ; he therefore could not help thinking that they might have been printed also.

In the declaration the steps which had been taken in conjunction with the Emperor were referred to, and he begged leave to ask the honourable gentleman a question at once for information, and to demonstrate how necessary it was to have the papers, and to reflect upon them maturely before they were made the foundation of any opinion. He would ask, therefore, Whether there was any communication to be made of documents to prove the circumstance of the measures which had been taken in co-operation with the Emperor, a matter of which at present he professed himself utterly ignorant ? It might be necessary therefore to have more information than it was intended to communicate to the House. Till they had the documents upon which it was founded, and to which it referred, it was impossible for the House to come to any resolution upon the declaration. He insisted that there ought to be some greater delay allowed than was at present proposed. He did not wish that the House should delay to testify their respect for His Ma

jeſty, and they might therefore thank him for his moſt gracious communication ; but when they were called to pronounce a deciſion which involved the lives, and the happineſs of their fellow ſubjects, it was decent and proper to require time for deliberation. He would renew the amendment he had propoſed yeſterday. Though there might be many gentlemen deſirous of being preſent upon ſo important an occaſion, and whom the ſhortneſs of the period allowed would diſappoint, he only aſked for two ſhort days, and therefore he did not mean to move for a later day than Monday, and when the lives, the intereſt and the happineſs of the people of this country were concerned in the determination they were to pronounce, he hoped the Houſe would not reſuſe to grant ſo ſhort an interval for reflection.

Mr. CANNING ſaid as he had ſome ſhare in the mechanical part of the arrangement and preparation of the papers which were to be produced, it would be improper for him to ſay any thing more with regard to the diligence which had been employed ; the papers would ſpeak for themſelves. But he would appeal to the candour of gentlemen, whether thoſe who had this management might not, upon a firſt view, have been miſtaken in their eſtimate of the time that would be neceſſary. It had been ſuppoſed that they could have been prepared in time to be laid before the Houſe to-day, and he was not ſure but they might be ready in an hour, yet it would not have been reſpectful to the Houſe to have kept them upon this ſuppoſition, and it was, therefore, thought proper to poſt-pone the conſideration of the meſſage till Friday, to allow the ſame time for reflection and deliberation. With regard to the contents of the papers he could make no answer. Had the right honourable Secretary of State and Chancellor of the Exchequer, both of whom were confined by indiſpoſition, been preſent, they might have been able to answer the right honourable gentleman's queſtions. If, however, when the papers were laid before the Houſe, they appeared to be incompetent to enable gentlemen to form an opinion, they might then have an opportunity of moving for ſuch other documents as might be deemed proper. As thoſe higher in office, and better qualified to give the Houſe any information upon the ſubject, were abſent, he would aſk the honourable gentleman, with that candour which was uſually practiſed by one gentleman to another, to defer any motion till he ſaw the papers, when he might have an opportunity to move for whatever he judged neceſſary.

The MASTER of the ROLLS ſaid, that there was the ſame reaſon to-day for fixing the conſideration of His Majeſty's meſſage for Friday, as yeſterday there was for fixing it for Thursday, and

the same period would be allowed for gentlemen to make up their minds.

Sir W. GEARY thought that there ought to be some time allowed for deliberation before the House pronounced a decision which was either to raise this country to the highest rank in the scale of Europe, or plunge it into the lowest state of misfortune. He hoped, therefore, that the House would for this purpose defer the consideration of the message till Monday.

General TARLETON contended that some additional delay ought to be allowed, as it would be impossible for the House to be sufficiently ripe for discussion, and for pronouncing their opinion upon so important a point in the time that was proposed.

Lord HAWKESBURY said he was surprized at the manner in which the honourable gentleman opposite had argued. The usual mode was to take the King's message into consideration upon the day after it was brought down, and here several days were given, that the opinions of gentlemen might be properly formed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, when the business was first intimated to the House, that the papers would be sufficient to bear out any motion of which they might form the foundation, and this had been confirmed by what had yesterday fallen from the right honourable Secretary of State. This he considered at present as all that was necessary. If the papers were inadequate, a motion might be made for the production of any others that might be thought requisite.

Mr. GREY said, that he would not take advantage of the absence of the right honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer and Secretary of State, to press the matter any farther, and he lamented the cause to which their absence was owing. At the same time he was not convinced that he was wrong in the request which he had urged. Without meaning to call upon the right honourable gentleman to disclose what officially he ought to conceal, he wished to know whether there were any papers relative to the steps taken in conjunction with the Emperor of Germany? With respect to the usual practice of taking a message into consideration the day after it was received, here the House were required to deliver an opinion, founded upon papers which they had not an opportunity properly to consider.

The order for taking His Majesty's message into consideration on Thursday was then discharged, and ordered to be taken into consideration on Friday.

Wednesday, 28th. December.

Mr. WHITBREAD said, that he had given notice of a motion concerning the practice of treating at elections, grounded on the proceedings which had taken place at the election for the Borough of Southwark ; but in consequence of the decision of the second Committee which tried the merits of that election, which must give satisfaction to every person—he did not wish to make any motion that could press with severity upon the gentleman against whom that decision had gone. He thought proper, however, at that time, to give notice that he should, shortly after the recess, make a motion relative to the act he had mentioned.

Mr. CANNING brought up the papers and documents relative to the negotiation between Lord Malmesbury and the Executive Directory of France ; which were ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. GREY observed, that in looking over these papers he perceived that one was not among them, which was as material as any of the others ; namely, the instructions that had been given to Lord Malmesbury.

Mr. CANNING could give no other answer than that if the papers on the table did not contain sufficient information, gentlemen might move for any others they should think necessary, on Friday next.

The following are authentic copies of all the papers relative to the negotiation laid on the table of the House of Commons, and printed for the use of the Members :

No. 1. *Note transmitted to M. Barthelemi by Mr. Wickham, March 8, 1796.*

THE undersigned, His Britannic Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary to the Swiss Cantons, is authorized to convey to Monsieur Barthelemi the desire of his Court to be made acquainted, through him, with the dispositions of France in regard to the object of a general pacification ; he therefore requests Monsieur Barthelemi to transmit to him in writing (after having made the necessary inquiries) his answer to the following questions :

1. Is there the disposition in France to open a negotiation with His Majesty and his allies for the re-establishment of a general peace upon just and suitable terms, by sending, for that purpose, ministers to a congress at such place as may hereafter be agreed upon ?

2. Would there be the disposition to communicate to the undersigned the general grounds of a pacification, such as France would be willing to propose, in order that His Majesty and his allies might thereupon examine in concert whether they are such as might serve as the foundation of a negotiation for peace ?

3. Or would there be a desire to propose any other way whatever for arriving at the same end, that of a general pacification ?

The undersigned is authorized to receive from Monsieur Barthelemi the answer to these questions, and to transmit it to his Court; but he is not authorized to enter with him into negotiation or discussion upon these subjects.

Berne, March 8, 1796.

(Signed) W. WICKHAM.

No. II. *Note transmitted to Mr. Wickham by M. Barthelemi, March 26, 1796.*

THE undersigned, Ambassador of the French Republic to the Helvetic Body, has transmitted to the Executive Directory the note which Mr. Wickham, His Britannic Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary to the Swiss Cantons, was pleased to convey to him, dated the 8th of March. He has it in command to answer it by an exposition of the sentiments and dispositions of the Executive Directory.

The Directory ardently desires to procure for the French Republic a just, honourable, and solid peace. The step taken by Mr. Wickham would have afforded to the Directory a real satisfaction, if the declaration itself, which that Minister makes, of his not having any order, any power to negotiate, did not give room to doubt of the sincerity of the pacific intentions of his Court. In fact, if it was true, that England began to know her real interests; that she wished to open again for herself the sources of abundance and prosperity; if she sought for peace with good faith; would she propose a congress, of which the necessary result must be, to render all negotiation endless? Or would she confine herself to the asking, in a vague manner, that the French Government should point out any other way whatever for attaining the same object, that of a general pacification?

Is it that this step has had no other object than to obtain for the British Government the favourable impression which always accompanies the first overtures for peace? May it not have been accompanied with the hope that they would produce no effect?

However that may be, the Executive Directory, whose policy has no other guides than openness and good faith, will follow, in its explanations, a conduct which shall be wholly conformable to them. Yielding to the ardent desire by which it is animated to procure peace for the French Republic, and for all nations, it will not fear to declare itself openly. Charged by the Constitution with the execution of the laws, it cannot make or listen to any proposal that would be contrary to them. The constitutional act does not permit it to consent to any alienation of that, which, according to the existing laws, constitutes the territory of the Republic.

With respect to the countries occupied by the French armies, and which have not been united to France, they, as well as other interests, political and commercial, may become the subject of a negotiation, which will present to the Directory the means of proving how much it desires to attain speedily to a happy pacification.

The Directory is ready to receive, in this respect, any overtures that shall be just, reasonable, and compatible with the dignity of the Republic.

(Signed) BARTHELEMI.

Basle, the 6th of Germinal, the 4th year of the French Republic, (26th of March, 1796.)

No. III. *Note.*

THE Court of London has received from its Minister in Switzerland the answer made to the questions which he had been charged to address to Monsieur Barthelemi, in respect to the opening of a negotiation for the re-establishment of general tranquillity.

This Court has seen with regret how far the tone and spirit of that answer, the nature and extent of the demands which it contains, and the manner of announcing them, are remote from any disposition of peace.

The inadmissible pretension is there avowed, of appropriating to France all that the laws actually existing there may have comprized under the denomination of French territory. To a demand such as this is added an express declaration, that no proposal contrary to it will be made, or even listened to; and this, under the pretence of an internal regulation, the provisions of which are wholly foreign to all other nations.

While these dispositions shall be persisted in, nothing is left for the King but to prosecute a war equally just and necessary.

Whenever his enemies shall manifest more pacific sentiments, His Majesty will at all times be eager to concur in them, by lending himself, in concert with his allies, to all such measures as shall be best calculated to re-establish general tranquillity, on conditions just, honourable, and permanent, either by the establishment of a congress, which has been so often and so happily the means of restoring peace to Europe; or by a preliminary discussion of the principles which may be proposed on either side, as a foundation of a general pacification; or, lastly, by any impartial examination of any other way which may be pointed out to him for arriving at the same salutary end.

Downing-street, April 10, 1796.

No. I.

SIR,

Downing-street, September 6, 1796.

IN obedience to the orders of the King my master, I have the honour to transmit to you the inclosed note, and to request of you that you will forward it to his Danish Majesty's Minister at Paris, to be by him communicated to the Executive Directory.

The sentiments of your Court are too well known to the King to admit of His Majesty's entertaining any doubt of the satisfaction with which his Danish Majesty will see the intervention of his Ministers employed on such an occasion, or of the earnestness with which you, Sir, will concur in a measure that has for its object the re-establishment of peace.

I have the honour to be,

With the most perfect consideration,

SIR,

Your most humble, and most obedient servant,

To the Count Wedel Jarlsberg, &c.

GRENVILLE.

No. 2. *Note.*

HIS Britannic Majesty, animated with the same desire, which he has already manifested, to terminate by just, honourable, and permanent conditions of peace, a war which has extended itself throughout all parts of the world, is willing to omit nothing on his part which may contribute to this object.

It is with this view that he has thought it proper to avail himself of

the confidential intervention of the Ministers of a neutral power, to demand of the Executive Directory passports for a person of confidence whom His Majesty would send to Paris with a commission to discuss, with the Government there, all the means the most proper to produce so desirable an end.

And His Majesty is persuaded that he shall receive, without delay, through the same channel, a satisfactory answer to this demand, which cannot fail to place in a still clearer light the just and pacific dispositions which he entertains in common with his allies.

Westminster, Sept. 16, 1796.

GRENVILLE.

No. 3.

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency, that the note addressed to the Executive Directory of France, in date of the 6th of the present month, was transmitted by Mr. Koenemann, chargé d'affaires of his Danish Majesty, to M. Delacroix, minister for foreign affairs at Paris, who promised that an answer should be returned to it after it has been submitted to the consideration of the Government. Three days having elapsed in expectation of this answer, Mr. Koenemann went a second time to the Minister above mentioned, who gave him to understand, that the Executive Directory had not permitted him to return an answer in writing, but that he was directed to express himself verbally to this effect:

“ That the Executive Directory of the French Republic would not for
“ the future receive or answer any overtures or confidential papers trans-
“ mitted through any intermediate channel from the enemies of the Re-
“ public; but that if they would send persons furnished with full powers
“ and official papers, these might, upon the frontiers, demand the pass-
“ ports necessary for proceeding to Paris.”

I have the honour to be, with the most perfect respect,

My Lord,

Your Excellency's most humble,

And most obedient servant,

London, Sept. 23, 1796. (Signed) Comte de WEDEL JARLSBERG.

No. 4.

SIR,

Paris, Sept. 19, 1796.

I WAS indisposed at my country house when your Excellency's courier brought me the letters, which your Excellency did me the honour to write to me on the 7th instant, together with the note of Lord Grenville inclosed therein. I set off for Paris on the following day, where, after demanding an audience of Citizen Delacroix, minister for foreign affairs, I presented the note above mentioned; accompanied by another in my own name, in which I explained the motives that had induced me to undertake a measure for which I had no authority from my court. He promised to submit the two notes to the inspection of the government, and to return me an answer immediately. Having waited for three days without receiving an answer, I went a second time to wait upon the Minister, who, in a very dry tone, informed me, that the Executive Directory had not permitted him to return an answer in writing, but that he was directed to express himself verbally to this effect:

“ That the Executive Directory of the French Republic would not, for
“ the future, receive or answer any confidential overtures or papers tran-

“mitted through any intermediate channel from the enemies of the Republic; but that if they would send persons, furnished with full powers and official papers, these might, upon the frontiers, demand the passports necessary for proceeding to Paris.”

Such, Sir, is the result of a measure which I have taken at your request. I wish, for the sake of humanity, that we may meet with better success at some future period; but I fear that this period is still at a great distance.

I have the honour to be, with respectful attachment,

SIR,

Your Excellency's most humble and

Most obedient servant,

KOENEMANN.

To his Excellency

The Count Wedel Jarlsberg, &c. &c. &c.

No. 5. Note.

IN demanding of the Executive Directory of the French Republic, through the intervention of the Ministers of a neutral power, a passport for a confidential person to be sent to Paris, the Court of London accompanied this demand with the express declaration, that this person should be commissioned to discuss with the Government all the means the most proper for conducing to the re-establishment of peace.

The King, persevering in the same sentiments, which he has already so unequivocally declared, will not leave to his enemies the smallest pretext for eluding a discussion, the result of which will necessarily serve either to produce the happiness of so many nations, or at least to render evident the views and dispositions of those who oppose themselves to it.

It is therefore in pursuance of these sentiments, that the undersigned is charged to declare, that as soon as the Executive Directory shall think proper to transmit to the undersigned the necessary passports (of which he, by this note, renews the demand already made), His Britannic Majesty will send to Paris a person furnished with full powers and official instructions to negotiate with the Executive Directory on the means of terminating the present war, by a pacification, just, honourable, and solid, calculated to restore repose to Europe, and to insure, for the time to come, the general tranquillity.

Westminster, Sept. 27, 1796. (Signed) GRENVILLE,
To the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Paris.

No. 6.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to Lord Grenville a copy of the decree of the Executive Directory of the French Republic, in answer to his note of the 27th September, 1796, (O. S.)

He will there see a proof of the earnest desire of the French Government to profit of the overture that is made to them, in the hope that it may lead to peace with the Government of England.

I have the honour to send to him, at the same time, the passports required for the Minister Plenipotentiary, whom His Britannic Majesty proposes to name to treat; and I request Lord Grenville to accept the assurance of my personal wishes for the success of this negotiation, as well as that of my most perfect consideration.

(Signed)

CH. DELACROIX.

*Paris, 11 Vendemiaire, 5th year of
the French Republic.*

No. 7.

Extract from the Register of the Decrees of the Executive Directory.

*The 9th Vendemiaire, 5th year of the French Republic,
One and Indivisible.*

THE Executive Directory, upon consideration of the note addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs by Lord Grenville, dated Westminster, September 24, 1796, wishing to give a proof of the desire which it entertains to make peace with England, decrees as follows:

The Minister for Foreign Affairs is charged to deliver the necessary passports to the Envoy of England, who shall be furnished with full powers, not only for preparing and negotiating the peace between the French Republic and that power, but for concluding it definitively between them.

True copy,

(Signed) L. M. REVELLIERE LEPEAUX, President.

By the Executive Directory.

For the Secretary General,

(Signed) LE TOURNEUR.

Certified true copy,

The Minister for Foreign Affairs,

CH. DELACROIX.

By the Minister,

J. GUIRAUDET, Sec. Gen.

No. 7^a.

LORD MALMESBURY, who is appointed by the King to treat with the French Government for a just and equitable peace, calculated to restore repose to Europe, and to insure the public tranquillity for the time to come, will have the honour of delivering this letter from me to M. Delacroix.

The distinguished rank and merit of the Minister of whom His Majesty has made choice on this occasion, makes it unnecessary for me to say any thing in his recommendation; at the same time that it furnishes a fresh proof of the desire of His Majesty to contribute to the success of this negotiation: for which object I entertain the most sanguine wishes.

Monsieur Delacroix will have the goodness to accept from me the assurance of my most perfect consideration.

Westminster, Oct. 13, 1796.

(Signed) GRENVILLE.

To the Minister for Foreign Affairs, at Paris.

No. 8.

LORD MALMESBURY, named by His Britannic Majesty as his Plenipotentiary to the French Republic, has the honour to announce, by his secretary, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, his arrival at Paris; and to request of him, at the same time, to be so good as to appoint the hour at which he may wait upon him, for the purpose of communicating to him the object of his mission.

Paris, Oct. 22, 1796.

To the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

No. 9.

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs learns with satisfaction the arrival of Lord Malmesbury, Plenipotentiary of His Britannic Majesty. He will

have the honour to receive him to-morrow at eleven o'clock in the morning, or at any later hour that may suit him, till two o'clock. He hopes that Lord Malmesbury will forgive him for thus limiting the time, on account of the nature and the multiplicity of his occupations.

1st Brumaire, An. 5.

(Oct. 22, 1796.)

*To Lord Malmesbury, Minister Plenipotentiary
from His Britannic Majesty to the French
Republic, at Paris.*

No. 10:

LORD MALMESBURY has the honour to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs for the obliging answer which he has just received from him.

He accepts with pleasure the first moment proposed, and will wait upon him to-morrow morning, at eleven o'clock precisely.

Paris, Oct. 22.

To the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

No. 11.

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs has the honour to apprise Lord Malmesbury, Commissioner Plenipotentiary of His Britannic Majesty, that he has received from the Executive Directory the necessary powers for negotiating and concluding peace between the Republic and His Majesty.

To-morrow, if Lord Malmesbury pleases, the respective powers shall be exchanged. The Minister for Foreign Affairs will then be ready to receive the propositions, which Lord Malmesbury is commissioned to make to the Republic on the part of His Britannic Majesty.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs requests Lord Malmesbury to accept the assurances of his high consideration.

2 Brumaire, An. 5.

(October 22, 1796.)

(Signed) CH. DELACROIX.

No. 12.

LORD MALMESBURY has the honour to present his acknowledgements to the Minister for Foreign Affairs for the communication which he just made to him, and he will have the honour to wait upon him to-morrow, at the hour which he shall have the goodness to appoint, to receive the copy of the full powers which he is furnished on the part of the Executive Directory; and as soon as they shall have been exchanged, he will be ready to commence the negotiation with which he is charged.

He requests the Minister for Foreign Affairs to accept the assurances of his high consideration.

Paris, Oct. 23, 1796.

(Signed) MALMESBURY.

No. 13.

Extrait from the Register of the Decrees of the Executive Directory.

*2 Brumaire (22 Nov.) 5th year of the French Republic,
one and indivisible.*

THE Executive Directory, after having heard the Report of the Minister for Foreign Affairs,

The citizen Charles Delacroix, Minister for Foreign Affairs, is charged to negotiate with Lord Malmesbury, Commissioner Plenipotentiary of His Britannic Majesty, furnished with full powers to prepare and negotiate peace between the French Republic and that power, and to conclude it definitively between them. The Directory gives to the said Minister all powers necessary for concluding and signing the treaty of peace to take place between the Republic and His Britannic Majesty. He shall conform himself to the instructions which shall be given him. He shall render a regular account, from time to time, of the progress and of the issue of the negotiation.

The present decree shall not be printed at this time.

A true copy.

(Signed)

L. R. REVELLIERE LEPEAUX.

By the Executive Directory.

The Secretary General,

(Signed)

LA GARDE.

Copy.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs,

(Signed) CH. DELACROIX.

By the Minister.

(L.S.)

T. GUIRAUDET, Sec. Gen.

No. 14, *Memorial.*

HIS Britannic Majesty desiring, as he has already declared, to contribute, as far as depends on him, to the re-establishment of public tranquillity, and to ensure, by the means of just, honourable, and solid conditions of peace, the future repose of Europe; His Majesty is of opinion, that the best means of attaining, with all possible expedition, that salutary end, will be to agree, at the beginning of the negotiation, on the general principle which shall serve as a basis to the definitive arrangements.

The first object of negotiations for peace generally relates to the restitutions and cessions which the respective parties have mutually to demand in consequence of the events of the war.

Great Britain, from the uninterrupted success of her naval war, finds herself in a situation to have no restitution to demand of France, from which, on the contrary, she has taken establishments and colonies of the highest importance, and of a value almost incalculable.

But, on the other hand, France has made on the continent of Europe conquests to which His Majesty can be the less indifferent, as the most important interests of his people, and the most sacred engagements of his crown, are essentially implicated therein.

The magnanimity of the King, his inviolable good faith, and his desire to restore repose to so many nations, induce him to consider this situation of affairs as affording the means of procuring for all the belligerent powers just and equitable terms of peace, and such as are calculated to insure for the time to come the general tranquillity.

It is on this footing, then, that he proposes to negotiate, by offering to make compensation to France, by proportionable restitutions, for those arrangements to which she will be called upon to consent, in order to satisfy the just demands of the King's allies, and to preserve the political balance of Europe.

Having made this first overture, His Majesty will, in the sequel, explain himself more particularly on the application of this principle to the different objects which may be discussed between the respective parties.

It is this application which will constitute the subject of those discussions, into which His Majesty has authorised his Minister to enter, as soon as the principle to be adopted as the general basis of the negotiation is known.

But His Majesty cannot omit to declare, that if this generous and equitable offer should not be accepted, or if unfortunately the discussions which may ensue should fail to produce the desired effect, neither this general proposition, nor those more detailed which may result from it, can be regarded in any case as points agreed upon or admitted by His Majesty.

(Signed)

MALMESBURY,
*Minister Plenipotentiary from
His Britannic Majesty.*

Paris, Oct. 24, 1796.

No. 15.

Extract from the Register of the Deliberations of the Executive Directory.

*Paris, 5 Brumaire, 5th year of the Republic,
one and indivisible.*

THE Executive Directory orders the Minister for Foreign Affairs to make the following answer to Lord Malmesbury.

The Executive Directory sees with pain, that at the moment when it had reason to hope for the speedy return of peace between the French Republic and His Britannic Majesty, the proposal of Lord Malmesbury offers nothing but dilatory or very distant means of bringing the negotiation to a conclusion.

The Directory observe, that if Lord Malmesbury would have agreed to treat separately, as he was formerly authorized by the tenour of his credentials, the negotiations might have been considerably abridged; that the necessity of balancing with the interests of the two powers those of the allies of Great Britain, multiplies the combinations, increases the difficulties, tends to the formation of a congress, the forms of which it is known are always tardy, and requires the accession of powers which hitherto have displayed no desire of accommodation, and have not given to Lord Malmesbury himself, according to his own declaration, any power to stipulate for them.

Thus, without prejudging the intentions of Lord Malmesbury, without drawing any conclusion from the circumstance of his declaration not appearing to accord with his credentials, without supposing that he has received any secret instructions which would destroy the effect of his ostensible powers, without pretending, in short, to assert that the British government have had a double object in view—to prevent, by general propositions, the partial propositions of other powers, and to obtain from the people of England the means of continuing the war, by throwing upon the Republic the odium of a delay, occasioned by themselves; the Executive Directory cannot but perceive that the proposition of Lord Malmesbury is nothing more than a renewal, under more amicable forms, of the propositions made last year by Mr. Wickham, and that it presents but a distant hope of peace.

The Executive Directory farther observe, with regard to the principle of retrocessions advanced by Lord Malmesbury, that such a principle, presented in a vague and isolated manner, cannot serve as the basis of negotiation; that the first points of consideration are, the common ne-

cessity of a just and solid peace, the political equilibrium which absolute retrocessions might destroy, and then the means which the belligerent powers might possess—the one to retain conquests at a time when it was supported by a great number of allies, now detached from the coalition; and the other, to recover them at a time when those who were at first its enemies have, almost all, become either its allies, or at least neuter.

Nevertheless, the Executive Directory, animated with an ardent desire of putting a stop to the scourge of war, and to prove that they will not reject any means of reconciliation, declare, that as soon as Lord Malmesbury shall exhibit to the Minister for Foreign Affairs sufficient powers from the allies of Great Britain for stipulating for their respective interests, accompanied by a promise on their part to subscribe to whatever shall be concluded in their names, the Executive Directory will hasten to give an answer to the specific propositions which shall be submitted to them, and that the difficulties shall be removed, as far as may be consistent with the safety and dignity of the French Republic.

A true copy.

(Signed)

L. M. REVELLIERE LEPEAUX, Pres.

By the Executive Directory.

(Signed)

LA GARDE, Sec. Gen.

A true copy.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs,

CH. DELACROIX.

By the Minister,

The Secretary General, J. GUIRAUDET.

No. 16. *Note.*

THE undersigned has not failed to transmit to his court the answer of the Executive Directory to the proposals which he was charged to make, as an opening to a pacific negotiation.

With regard to the offensive and injurious insinuations which are contained in that paper, and which are only calculated to throw new obstacles in the way of the accommodation which the French Government professes to desire, the King has deemed it far beneath his dignity to permit an answer to be made to them on his part in any manner whatsoever.

The progress and the result of the negotiation will sufficiently prove the principles by which it will have been directed on each side; and it is neither by revolting reproaches wholly destitute of foundation, nor by reciprocal invective, that a sincere wish to accomplish the great work of pacification can be evinced.

The undersigned passes, therefore, to the first object of discussion brought forward in the answer of the Executive Directory;—that of a separate negotiation, to which it has been supposed, without the smallest foundation, that the undersigned was authorised to accede.

His full powers, made out in the usual form, give him all necessary authority to negotiate and to conclude the peace; but these powers prescribe to him neither the form, the nature, nor the conditions of the future treaty.

Upon these points, he is bound to conform himself, according to the long established and received custom of Europe, to the instructions which he shall receive from his court; and accordingly, he did not fail to acquaint the Minister for Foreign Affairs, at th ir first conference, that the King his master had expressly enjoined him to listen to no pre-

posal tending to separate the interests of His Majesty from those of his allies.

There can be no question then but of a negotiation which shall combine the interests and pretensions of all the powers who make a common cause with the King in the present war.

In the course of such a negotiation, the intervention, or, at least, the participation, of these powers will doubtless become absolutely necessary; and His Majesty hopes to find at all times the same dispositions to treat, upon a just and equitable basis, of which His Majesty, the Emperor and King, gave to the French Government so striking a proof at the very moment of the opening of the present campaign.

But it appears, that the waiting for a formal and definitive authority on the part of the allies of the King, before Great Britain and France begin to discuss, even provisionally, the principles of the negotiation, would be to create a very useless delay.

A conduct wholly different has been observed by these two powers on almost all similar occasions; and His Majesty thinks, that the best proof which they can give, at the present moment, to all Europe, of their mutual desire to put a stop, as soon as possible, to the calamities of war, would be to settle, without delay, the basis of a combined negotiation, inviting, at the same time, their allies to concur in it, in the manner the most proper for accelerating the general pacification.

It is with this view that the undersigned was charged to propose at first, and at the very commencement of the negotiation, a principle, which the generosity and good faith of His Majesty could alone dictate to him—that of making compensation to France, by proportionable restitutions, for the arrangements to which she will be to consent, in order to satisfy the just pretensions of the King's allies, and to preserve the political balance of Europe.

The Executive Directory has not explained itself in a precise manner, either as to the acceptance of this principle, or as to the changes or modifications which it may desire to be made in it; nor has it, in short, proposed any other principle whatever to answer the same end.

The undersigned, then, has orders to recur to this point, and to demand, on that head, a frank and precise explanation, in order to abridge the delays, which must necessarily result from the difficulty of form, which has been started by the Executive Directory.

He is authorized to add to this demand the express declaration, that His Majesty, in communicating to his august allies every successive step which he may take relative to the object of the present negotiation, and in fulfilling, towards those sovereigns, in the most efficacious manner, all the duties of a good and faithful ally, will omit nothing on his part, as well to dispose them to concur in this negotiation, by the means the most proper to facilitate its progress and insure its success, as to induce them always to persist in sentiments conformable to the wishes which he entertains for the return of a general peace, upon just, honourable, and permanent conditions.

Paris, Nov. 12, 1796.

(Signed) MALMESBURY.

No. 17.

THE undersigned is charged by the Executive Directory to invite you to point out, without the smallest delay, and expressly, the objects of reciprocal compensation which you propose.

He is, moreover, charged to demand of you, what are the dispositions

to treat, on a just and equitable basis, of which His Majesty, the Emperor and King, gave to the French Government so striking a proof, at the very commencement of the campaign. The Executive Directory is unacquainted with it. It was the Emperor and King who broke the armistice.

(Signed)

CH. DELACROIX.

Paris, 22 Brumaire, (Nov. 12,) 5th year of the French Republic.

No. 18.

THE undersigned does not hesitate a moment to answer the two questions which you have been instructed by the Executive Directory to put to him.

The memorial presented this morning by the undersigned proposes, in express terms, on the part of His Majesty the King of Great Britain, to compensate France, by proportionable restitutions, to the arrangements to which she will be called upon to consent, in order to satisfy the just pretensions of the King's allies, and to preserve the political balance of Europe.

Before the formal acceptation of this principle, or the proposal, on the part of the Executive Directory, of some other principle, which might equally serve as the basis of a negotiation for a general peace, the undersigned cannot be authorized to designate the objects of reciprocal compensation.

As to the proof of the pacific dispositions given to the French Government by His Majesty, the Emperor and King, at the opening of the campaign, the undersigned contents himself with a reference to the following words contained in the note of Baron d'Engleman, on the 4th of June last.

"The operations of the war will in no wise prevent his Imperial Majesty from being ever ready to concur, agreeably to any form of negotiation which shall be adopted, in concert with the belligerent powers, in the discussion of proper means for putting a stop to the farther effusion of human blood."

This note was presented after the armistice was broken.

Paris, Nov. 12, 1796.

MALMESBURY.

No. 19.

THE Minister Plenipotentiary of His Britannic Majesty requests the Minister for Foreign Affairs to inform him, whether he is to consider the official note which he received from him yesterday evening, as the answer to that which Lord Malmesbury delivered yesterday morning to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, by order of his Court. He applies for this information, that the departure of his courier may not be unnecessarily delayed.

Paris, Nov. 13, 1796.

MALMESBURY.

No. 20.

THE undersigned, Minister for Foreign Affairs, declares to Lord Malmesbury, Minister Plenipotentiary from His Britannic Majesty, that he is to consider the official note sent to him yesterday as the answer to

that which Lord Malmesbury had addressed to him on the morning of the same day.

*23 Brumaire, 5th year,
November 13, 1796.*

CHARES DELACROIX.

No. 21.

LORD MALMESBURY has just received the answer of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which he declares that the official note which he sent to him yesterday, is to be considered as the answer to that which Lord Malmesbury addressed to him on the morning of the same day.

Lord Malmesbury will transmit it, this day, to his Court.

Paris, Nov. 13, 1796.

MALMESBURY.

No. 22.

THE undersigned, in reply to your second note of yesterday, is ordered by the Executive Directory to declare to you, that he has nothing to add to the answer which has been addressed to you. He is also instructed to ask you, whether, on each official communication which shall take place between you and him, it will be necessary for you to send a courier to receive special instructions?

*Paris, Brumaire, (Nov. 13.)
5th year.*

CHARLES DELACROIX.

No. 23.

THE undersigned will not fail to transmit to his Court the note which he has just received from the Minister for Foreign Affairs. He declares likewise that he shall dispatch couriers to his Court as often as the official communications made to him may require special instructions.

Paris, 13th Nov. 1796.

(Signed)

MALMESBURY.

No. 24. Note.

THE Court of London, having been informed of what has passed in consequence of the last memorial, delivered, by its order, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, does not think it necessary to add any thing to the answer made by the undersigned to the two questions which the Directory thought proper to address to him.

That Court waits therefore, and with the greatest anxiety, for an explanation of the sentiments of the Directory, with regard to the principle it has proposed, as the basis of the negotiation, and the adoption of which appeared to be the best means of accelerating the progress of a discussion so important to the happiness of so many nations.

The undersigned has, in consequence, received orders to renew the demand of a frank and precise answer on this point, in order that his Court may know, with certainty, whether the Directory accepts that proposal; or desires to make any change or modification whatever in it; or lastly, whether it would wish to propose any other principle, that may promote the same end.

Paris, Nov. 26, 1796.

MALMESBURY.

No. 25.

IN answer to the note delivered yesterday, November 26, by Lord Malmesbury, the undersigned Minister for Foreign Affairs is instructed by

the Directory, to observe, that the answers made on the 5th and 22d of last Brumaire, contained an acknowledgement of the principle of compensation, and that, in order to remove every pretext for farther discussion on that point, the undersigned, in the name of the Executive Directory, now makes a formal and positive declaration of such acknowledgement.

In consequence, Lord Malmesbury is again invited to give a speedy and categorical answer to the proposal made to him on the 22d of last Brumaire, and which was conceived in these terms: "The undersigned is instructed by the Executive Directory to invite you to designate, without the least delay, and expressly, the objects of reciprocal compensation which you have to propose.

Paris, Nov, 27.

CH. DELACROIX.

No. 26.

THE undersigned Minister Plenipotentiary of His Britannic Majesty, in answer to the note dated this morning, which was sent to him by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, hastens to assure him, that he will not delay a moment in communicating it to his Court, from which he must necessarily wait for farther orders, before he can explain himself upon the important points which it contains.

Paris, 27th Nov. 1796.

(Signed) MALMESBURY.

No, 27. Note.

THE undersigned is charged to transmit to the Minister for Foreign Affairs the enclosed memorial, containing the proposals of his Court, with respect to the application of the general principle already established, as the basis of the negotiation for peace.

He will, with the utmost readiness, enter with that Minister into every explanation which the state and progress of the negotiation will allow, and he will not fail to enter into the discussion of these propositions, or of any counter-project which may be transmitted to him on the part of the Executive Directory, with that frankness and that spirit of conciliation, which correspond with the just and pacific intentions of his Court.

Paris, Dec. 17, 1796.

(Signed) MALMESBURY.

No. 28.

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORIAL on the principal Objects of Restitution, Compensation, and reciprocal Arrangement.

THE principle, already established, as the basis of the negotiation, by the consent of the two Governments, is founded on restitutions to be made by His Britannic Majesty to France, in compensation for the arrangements to which that power may consent, in order to satisfy the just pretensions of the allies of the King, and to preserve the political balance of Europe.

In order to accomplish these objects, in the manner the most complete, and to offer a fresh proof of the sincerity of his wishes for the re-establishment of general tranquillity, His Majesty would propose, that there should be given to this principle, on each side, all the latitude of which it may be susceptible.

I. His Majesty demands therefore,

1. The restitution, to His Majesty, the Emperor and King, of all his dominions, on the footing of the *status ante bellum*.

2. The re-establishment of peace between the Germanic empire and France, by a suitable arrangement, conformable to the respective interests, and to the general safety of Europe. This arrangement to be negotiated with his Imperial Majesty, as constitutional head of the empire, either by the intervention of the King, or immediately, as his Imperial Majesty shall prefer.

3. The evacuation of Italy by the French troops, with an engagement not to interfere in the internal affairs of that country; which should be re-established, as far as possible, upon the footing of the *status ante bellum*.

In the course of the negotiation, a more detailed discussion may be entered into of the farther measures which it may be proper to adopt, respecting the objects of these three articles, in order to the providing more effectually for the future security of the respective limits and possessions, and for the maintenance of general tranquillity.

II. With regard to the other allies of His Britannic Majesty, His Majesty demands, that there be reserved to Her Majesty the Empress of all the Russias, a full and unlimited power, of taking part in this negotiation, whenever she may think fit, or of acceding to the definitive treaty, and thereby returning to a state of peace with France.

III. His Majesty also demands, that Her Most Faithful Majesty may be comprehended in this negotiation, and may return to a state of peace with France, without any cession or burdensome condition on either side.

IV. On these conditions, His Majesty offers to France the entire and unreserved restitution of all the conquests which he has made on that power in the East and West Indies, proposing at the same time that a mutual understanding shall be established as to the means of securing for the future the tranquillity of the two nations, and of consolidating, as much as possible, the advantages of their respective possessions. His Majesty offers, in like manner, the restitution of the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, and of the fishery of Newfoundland, on the footing of the *status ante bellum*.

But if, in addition to this, His Majesty were to wave the right given to him by the express stipulations of the treaty of Utrecht, of opposing the cession of the Spanish part of St. Domingo to France, His Majesty would then demand, in return for this concession, a compensation, which might secure, at least in some degree, the maintenance of the balance of the respective possessions in that part of the world.

V. In all the cases of cessions or restitutions, which may come in question in the course of this negotiation, there should be granted on each side, to all individuals, the most unlimited right to withdraw with their families and their property, and to sell their land and other immoveable possessions; and adequate arrangements should also be made, in the course of this negotiation, for the removal of all sequestrations, and for the satisfaction of the just claims which individuals on either side may have to make upon the respective governments.

(Signed)

MALMESBURY.

No. 29.

Confidential Memorial on the Peace with Spain and Holland.

THE allies of France not having hitherto expressed any desire or disposition to treat with the King, His Majesty might have forborne to

enter into any detail on their account; but in order to avoid any delays prejudicial to the great object which the King has in view, and to accelerate the work of a general peace, His Majesty will not refuse to explain himself in the first instance on the points which concern those powers. If, then, the Catholic King should desire to be comprehended in this negotiation, or be allowed to accede to the definitive treaty, this would meet with no obstacle on the part of His Majesty. Nothing having hitherto been conquered by either of the two Sovereigns from the other, no other point could, at the present moment, come into question but that of the re-establishment of peace, simply, and without any restitution or compensation whatever, except such as might possibly result from the application of the principle declared at the end of the fourth article of the memorial already delivered to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

But if, during the negotiation, any alteration should take place in the state of things, in this respect, it will then be proper to agree upon the restitution and compensations to be made on each side.

With regard to the Republic of the United Provinces, His Britannic Majesty and his allies find themselves too nearly interested in the political situation of those provinces, to be able to consent in their favour to the re-establishment of the *status ante bellum* as with respect to territorial possessions, unless France could, on her part, reinstate them in all respects in the same political situation in which they stood before the war.

If, at least, it were possible to re-establish in those provinces, agreeably to what is believed to be the wish of a great majority of the inhabitants, their ancient Constitution and form of Government, His Majesty might then be disposed to relax, in their favour, from a very considerable part of the conditions on which the present state of things obliges him to insist.

But if, on the contrary, it is with the Republic of Holland, in its present state, that their Britannic and Imperial Majesties will have to treat, they will feel themselves obliged to seek in territorial acquisitions, those compensations, and that security, which such a state of things will have rendered indispensable to them.

Restitutions of any kind, in favour of Holland, could in that case be admitted, in so far only as they shall be compensated by arrangements calculated to contribute to the security of the Austrian Netherlands. The means of accomplishing this object will be found in the cessions which France has exacted in her treaty of peace with Holland; and the possession of which, by that power, would in any case be absolutely incompatible with the security of the Austrian Netherlands, in the hands of his Imperial Majesty.

It is on these principles that His Britannic Majesty would be ready to treat for the re-establishment of peace with the Republic of Holland in its present state. The details of such a discussion must necessarily lead to the consideration of what would be due to the interests and the rights of the House of Orange.

No. 30.

MY LORD,

Paris, Dec. 20, 1796.

MR. ELLIS returned here, from London, on Thursday last, the 15th instant, at five P. M. and delivered to me the dispatches No. 11 and 12, with which he was charged by your Lordship.

Although nothing can be clearer, more ably drawn up, or more satisfactory, than the instructions they contain; yet as it was of the last importance that I should be completely master of the subject before I saw the French Minister, I delayed asking for a conference till late on Friday evening, with a view that it should not take place till Saturday morning.

He appointed the hour of eleven A. M. on that day, and it was near one before we parted. Although what is said by M. Delacroix before he has communicated with the Directory, cannot be considered as officially binding, and probably may, in the event, be very different from what I shall hear when he speaks to me in their name; yet, as it is impossible they should not nearly conjecture the nature of the overtures I should make, and of course be prepared in some degree for them, it is material that your Lordship should be accurately acquainted with the first impressions they appear to make on M. Delacroix.

I prefaced what I had to communicate with saying, that I now came authorized to enter with him into deliberation upon one of the most important subjects that, perhaps, ever was brought into discussion; that its magnitude forbade all *sineste*, excluded all prevarication, suspended all prejudices, and that, as I had it in command to speak and act with freedom and truth, I expected that he, on his part, would consider these as the only means which could or ought to be employed, if he wished to see a negotiation, in which the happiness of millions was involved, terminate successfully. That, for greater precision, and with a view to be clearly understood in what I was about to propose, I would give him a confidential memorial, accompanied by an official note, both which, when he had perused them, would speak for themselves. The memorial contained the conditions, on the accomplishment of which His Majesty considered the restoration of peace to depend. The note was expressive of His Majesty's readiness to enter into any explanation required by the Directory on the subject, or to receive any *contre projet*, resting on the same basis, which the Directory might be disposed to give in. That, moreover, I did not hesitate declaring to him, in conformity to the principles which I had laid down, and from which I certainly never should depart, at any period of the negotiation, that I was prepared to answer any questions, explain and elucidate any points, on which it was possible to foresee that doubts or misconceptions could arise, on the consideration of these papers. And having said thus much, I had only to remark, that I believed, in no similar negotiation which had ever taken place, any Minister was authorized, in the first instance, to go so fully into the discussion as I now was. That I was sure neither the truth of this remark, nor the manifest conclusion to be drawn from it, would escape M. Delacroix's observation.

I then put the two papers into his hands. He began by reading the note, on which, of course, he could only express satisfaction. After perusing the confidential memorial, with all the attention it deserved, he, after a short pause, said, that it appeared to him to be liable to insurmountable objections; that it seemed to him to require much more than it conceded, and, in the event, not to leave France in a situation of proportional greatness to the powers of Europe. He said, the act of their Constitution, according to the manner in which *it was interpreted by the best publicists*, (and this phrase is worthy remark,) made it impossible for the Republic to do what it required. The Austrian Netherlands were annexed to it; they could not be disposed of without flinging the nation

into all the confusion which must follow a convocation of the primary assemblies; and he said, he was rather surprized that Great Britain should bring this forward as the governing condition of the treaty, since he thought he had, in some of our late conversations, fully explained the nature of their Constitution to me. I replied, that every thing I had heard from him on this point, was perfectly in my recollection, as it probably was in his; that though I had listened to him with that attention I always afforded to every thing he said, yet I had never made him any sort of reply, and had neither admitted, nor controverted his opinion: that although I believed I could easily disprove this opinion from the spirit of the French Constitution itself; yet the discussion of that Constitution was perfectly foreign to the object of my mission; since, even allowing his two positions, viz. that the retrocession of the Austrian Netherlands was incompatible with their laws, and that we ought to have known that beforehand; yet that there existed a *droit public* in Europe, paramount to any *droit public* they might think proper to establish within their own dominions; and that, if their Constitution was publicly known, the treaties existing between His Majesty and the Emperor were at least equally public, and in these it was clearly and distinctly announced, that the two contracting parties reciprocally promise not to lay down their arms without the restitution of all the dominions, territories, &c. which may have belonged to either of them before the war. That the date of this stipulation was previous to their annexing the Austrian Netherlands to France; and the notoriety of this ought, at the very moment when they had passed that law, to have convinced them, that, if adhered to, it must prove an insurmountable obstacle to peace. I applied his maxim to the West-India Islands, and to the settlements in the East Indies; and asked him, whether it was expected that we were to wave our right of possession, and be required still to consider them as integral parts of the French Republic, which *must* be restored, and on which no value was to be set in the balance of compensation. I also stated the possible case of France having lost part of what she deemed her integral dominions, instead of having added to them, in the course of the war; and whether then, under the apprehension of still greater losses, the government, as it was now composed, should consider itself as not vested with powers sufficient to save their country from the impending danger, by making peace on the conditions of sacrificing a portion of their dominions to save the remainder. M. Delacroix said, this was stating a case of necessity, and such a mode of reasoning did not attach to the present circumstances. I readily admitted the first part of this proposition; but contended, that if the power existed in a case of necessity, it equally existed in all others, and particularly in the case before us, since he himself had repeatedly told me, that peace was what this country and its government wished for, and even wanted.

M. Delacroix, in reply, shifted his ground, and by a string of arguments, founded on premises calculated for this purpose, attempted to prove, that from the relative situation of the adjacent countries, the present Government of France would be reprehensible in the extreme, and deserve impeachment, if they ever suffered the Netherlands to be separated from their dominions; that by the partition of Poland, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, had increased their power to a most formidable degree; that England, by its conquests, and by the activity and judgement with which it governed its colonies, had doubled its strength. Your Indian empire

alone, said M. Delacroix with vehemence, has enabled you to subsidize all the powers of Europe against us, and your monopoly of trade has put you in possession of a fund of inexhaustible wealth. His words were, "*Votre empire dans l'Inde vous a fourni les moyens de salarier toutes les puissances contre nous, et vous avez accaparé le commerce de manière que toutes les richesses du monde se versent dans vos coffres.*"

From the necessity that France should keep the Netherlands and the left bank of the Rhine, for the purpose of preserving its relative situation in Europe, he passed to the advantages which he contended would result to the other powers by such an addition to the French dominions. Belgium, (to use his word,) by belonging to France, would remove what had been the source of all wars for two centuries past; and the Rhine, being the natural boundary of France, would insure the tranquillity of Europe for two centuries to come. I did not feel it necessary to combat this preposterous doctrine; I contented myself with reminding him of what he had said to me in one of our last conferences, when he made a comparison of the weakness of France under its monarchs, and its strength and vigour under its republican form of government. "*Nous ne sommes plus dans la décrépidité de la France monarchique, mais dans toute la force d'une république adolescente,*" was his expression; and I inferred from this, according to his own reasoning, that the force and power France had acquired by its change of government, was much greater than it could derive from any acquisition of territory; and that it followed, if France, when under a regal form of government was a very just and constant object of attention, not to say of jealousy, to the other powers of Europe, France, (admitting his axiom) was a much more reasonable object of jealousy and attention, under its present constitution, than it ever had yet been; and that no addition to its dominions could be seen by its neighbours, but under impressions of alarm for their own future safety, and for the general tranquillity of Europe. M. Delacroix's answer to this was so remarkable, that I must beg leave to insert it in what I believe to be nearly his own words: "*Dans le tems révolutionnaire tout ce que vous dites, my Lord, étoit vrai—rien n'égalait notre puissance; mais ce tems n'existe plus. Nous ne pouvons plus lever la nation en masse pour valoir au secours de la patrie en danger. Nous ne pouvons plus engager nos concitoyens d'ouvrir leurs bourses pour les verser dans le trésor national, et de se priver même du nécessaire pour le bien de la chose publique.*" And he ended by saying, that the French Republic, when at peace, necessarily must become the most quiet and pacific power in Europe. I only observed, that in this case the passage of the Republic, from youth to decrepitude, had been very sudden; but that still I never could admit, that it could be a matter of indifference to its neighbours, much less one necessary security to itself, to acquire such a very extensive addition to its frontiers, as that he had hinted at.

This led M. Delacroix to talk of offering an equivalent to the Emperor for the Austrian Netherlands; and it was to be found, according to his plan, in the secularization of the three ecclesiastical electorates, and several bishoprics in Germany and in Italy.

He talked upon this subject as one very familiar to him, and on which his thoughts had been frequently employed.

He spoke of making new electors, and named, probably, with a view to render his scheme more palatable, the Stadtholder and the Dukes of Brunswick and Wurtemberg as persons proper to replace the three ecclesiastical electors which were to be re-formed.

It would be making an ill use of your Lordship's time to endeavour to repeat to you all he said on this subject; it went in substance (as he himself confessed) to the total subversion of the present constitution of the Germanic body; and as it militated directly against the principle which both His Majesty and the Emperor laid down so distinctly as the basis of the peace to be made for the empire, I contented myself with reminding him of this circumstance, particularly as it is impossible to discuss this point with any propriety till his Imperial Majesty becomes a party to the negotiation. I took this opportunity of hinting, that if on all the other points France agreed to the proposals now made, it would not be impossible that some increase of territory might be ceded to her on the Germanic side of her frontiers, and that this, in addition to the duchy of Savoy, Nice, and Avignon, would be a very great acquisition of strength and power. M. Delacroix here again reverted to the constitution, and said, that these countries were already constitutionally annexed to France. I replied, that it was impossible, in the negotiation which we were beginning, for the other powers to take it up from any period but that which immediately preceded the war, and that any acquisition or diminution of territory which had taken place among the belligerent powers since it first broke out, must necessarily become subject matter for negotiation, and be balanced against each other in the final arrangement of a general peace. You then persist, said M. Delacroix, in applying this principle to Belgium? I answered, most certainly; and I should not deal fairly with you if I hesitated to declare, in the outset of our negotiation, that on this point you must entertain no expectation that His Majesty will relax, or ever consent to see the Netherlands remain a part of France.

M. Delacroix replied, he saw no prospect in this case of our ideas ever meeting, and he despaired of the success of our negotiation. He returned again, however, to his idea of a possible equivalent to be found for the Emperor; but as all he proposed was the alienation or dismemberment of countries not belonging to France, even by conquest, I did not consider it as deserving attention, and it is certainly not worth repeating to your Lordship.

I need not observe that all the equivalents proposed, however inadequate to the exchange, were offered as a return for our consent that the Netherlands should remain part of France, of course the admitting them in any shape would have been in direct contradiction to my instructions.

M. Delacroix touched very slightly on Italy; and the course of our conversation did not bring this part of the subject more into discussion.

I must add, that whenever I mentioned the restoration of the Netherlands to the Emperor, I always took care it should be understood that these were to be accompanied by such further cessions as should form a competent line of defence, and that France could not be permitted to keep possession of all the intermediate country to the Rhine; and I particularly dwelt on this point, when I held out the possibility of admitting an extension of the limits of France on the side of Germany. But as the French Minister no less strenuously opposed the restitution of the Netherlands to the Emperor, than I tenaciously insisted upon it, the farther extension of my claim could not of course become a subject of argument.

I believe I have now, with a tolerable degree of accuracy, informed

your Lordship of all that the French Minister said on my opening myself to him on that part of my instructions which more immediately relates to peace between Great Britain, his Imperial Majesty, and France. It remains with me to inform your Lordship what passed between us on the subject of our respective allies.

On the articles reserving a right to the Court of St. Peterburgh, and to that of Lisbon, to accede to the treaty of peace on the strict *status ante bellum*, the French Minister made no other remark than by mentioning the allies of the Republic, and by inquiring whether I was prepared to say any thing relative to their interests, which certainly the Republic could never abandon. This afforded me the opportunity of giving in the confidential memorial B. relative to Spain and Holland, and I prefaced it by repeating to him the substance of the first part of your Lordship's, No. 12.

Although I had touched upon the subject of the Spanish part of St. Domingo, when I had been speaking to M. Delacroix on the peace with France, yet, as it did not become a matter of discussion between us till I came to mention the peace with Spain; I thought it better to place all that passed on the subject in this part of my dispatch; it was the only point on which he entered, but I by no means infer from his not bringing forward some claims for Spain, that we are not to hear of any in the course of the negotiation: on the contrary, I have little doubt that many, and most of them inadmissible, will be made before it can end. He, however, was silent on them at this moment, and confined all he had to say to combating the idea that Spain was bound, by the treaty of Utrecht, not to alienate her possessions in America. I had the article copied in my pocket, and I read it to him. He confessed it was clear and explicit, but that circumstances had so materially altered since the year 1713, that engagements made then ought not to be considered as in force now. I said, that the spirit of the article itself went to provide for distant contingencies, not for what was expected to happen at or near the time when the treaty was made, and that it was because the alteration of circumstances he alluded to was foreseen as possible that the clause was inserted; and that if Spain paid any regard to the faith of treaties, she must consider herself as no less strictly bound by this clause now than at the moment when it was drawn up. I went on, by saying, that it did not however appear quite impossible that this point might be settled without much difficulty; and that means might be devised that his Catholic Majesty should not break his faith, and both England and France be equally satisfied. I then held out to him, but in general terms, that either Spain might regain her part of St. Domingo, by making some considerable cession to Great Britain and France, as the price of peace, or that, in return for leaving the whole of St. Domingo to France, we should retain either Martinico or St. Lucia and Tobago. M. Delacroix listened with a degree of attention to these proposals, but he was fearful of committing himself by any expression of approbation, and he dismissed the subject of the Court of Madrid, by observing, that France never would forsake the interests of its allies.

Our conversation on those of its other ally, Holland, was much longer, as the wording of the memorial inevitably led at once deep into the subject.

M. Delacroix affected to treat any deviation from the treaty of peace concluded between France and that country, or any restoration of territories acquired under that treaty to France, as quite impracticable. He

treated, as equally impracticable, any attempt at restoring the ancient form of government in the Seven United Provinces. He talked with an air of triumph of the establishment of a national convention at the Hague, and with an affectation of feeling, that by it the cause of freedom had extended itself over such a large number of people. He, however, was ready to confess, that, from the great losses the Dutch Republic had sustained in its colonies, and particularly from the weak manner in which they had defended them, it could not be expected that His Majesty would consent to a full and complete restitution of them, and that it was reasonable that some should be sacrificed; and he asked me, if I could inform him, how far our views extended on this point? I said, I had reason to believe that what His Majesty would require would be possessions and settlements which would not add either to the power or wealth of our Indian dominions, but only tend to secure to us their safe and unmolested possession. "You mean, by this," said M. Delacroix, "the Cape and Trincomale." I said, they certainly came under that description, and I saw little prospect of their being restored to the Dutch. M. Delacroix launched forth, on this, into a most laboured dissertation on the value of the Cape of Good Hope, which he did not consider at all as a *port de relache*, but as a possession which, in our hands, would become one of the most fertile and most productive colonies in the East; and, according to his estimation of it, he did not scruple to assert, that it would ultimately be an acquisition of infinitely greater importance to England than that of the Netherlands to France: and, if acquiesced in, should be reckoned as a full and ample compensation for them. He added, "If you are masters of the Cape and Trincomale, we shall hold all our settlements in India, and the islands of France and Bourbon, entirely at the tenure of your will and pleasure; they will be ours only as long as you chuse we should retain them. You will be sole masters in India, and we shall be entirely dependent upon you." I repeated to him, that it was as means of defence, not of offence, that these possessions would be insisted on, and that if the matter was fairly and dispassionately discussed, he would find that they afforded us a great additional security, but no additional power of attack, even if we were disposed to disturb the peace of that part of the world. If these, and, perhaps, some few other not very material settlements belonging to the Dutch, were to be insisted upon, and if he would be pleased to enumerate all we should still have to restore to them, while they had nothing to restore to England, it was impossible not to consider the terms on which His Majesty proposed peace to Holland as generous and liberal.

M. Delacroix was not at all disposed to agree with me on this point, and said, Holland, stripped of these possessions, would be ruined. He then held out, but as if the idea had just crossed his mind, the possibility of indemnifying the Dutch for their losses in India, by giving them a tract of territory towards the Meuse, (I could not find out whether he meant Aix la Chapelle, Liege, or the countries of Juliers and Berg) and hinted, that if this was not to be done, an additional sugar island might, perhaps, be ceded to the Dutch Republic. I told him, all this might become a subject of future discussion, and I conceived, that if we could agree upon the more essential points, the treaty would not break off on these secondary considerations. Our conversation had now been extremely long, and M. Delacroix ended by saying, that although he taken upon himself to enter with me thus far upon the subject

must not consider any thing he said as binding, or as pledging the Republic, till such time as he had laid the papers I had given him before the Directory; and, in order to do this with more accuracy, he again asked me, whether in his report he was to state the disuniting Belgium from France as a *sine qua non* from which His Majesty would not depart. I replied, it most certainly was a *sine qua non* from which His Majesty would not depart; and that any proposal which would leave the Netherlands annexed to France would be attended with much greater benefit to that power, and loss to the allies, than the present relative situation of the belligerent powers could entitle the French Government to expect.

M. Delacroix repeated his concern at the peremptory way in which I made this assertion, and asked, whether it would admit of no modification? I replied, if France could, in a *contre projet*, point out a practicable and adequate one, still keeping in view that the Netherlands must not be French, or likely again to fall into the hands of France, such a proposal might certainly be taken into consideration.

M. Delacroix by no means encouraged me to explain myself more fully; he repeatedly said, that this difficulty relative to the Netherlands was one which could not be overcome.

Just as I was taking leave of him, he begged me to explain what was meant by the words in the Memoire (A) in the 4th paragraph, beginning *de s'entendre mutuellement sur les moyens d'assurer*, and ending at *Leurs possessions respectives*. I told him, it referred to the destructive system adopted by France in the West Indies, and went to express a wish, that the two powers should agree on some general and uniform system of internal police in the settlements there, which would contribute to the security of these possessions to the respective countries, and at the same time to the happiness of every description of inhabitants in them.

M. Delacroix, a little hurt at my expression relative to the system adopted by France, endeavoured to recriminate on us; but he ended by saying, that they should certainly be willing to concur in any arrangement relative to the negroes which did not militate against the principles of their constitution.

Here our conference ended; and as, during the whole course of it, I bore in my mind the possibility, that although this our first might be the only favourable opportunity I should ever have of speaking on the general principles on which His Majesty was disposed to treat, I endeavoured, by adverting more or less to almost every point in my instructions, to enable M. Delacroix (if he reports faithfully) to state to the Directory what I said in such a manner as to put it out of their power to misconceive what were His Majesty's intentions, to remove all possibility of cavil on this case, and to bring them to a clear and distinct answer whether they would agree to open a negotiation on the principle of the *status ante bellum*, or on one differing from it only in form, not in substance. I hope, in attempting to do this, I did not, in the first instance, commit myself, or discover more of my instructions than it became me to do, and that in the conversation with M. Delacroix nothing escaped me which might, at some subsequent period, hurt the progress of the negotiation. I have, I believe, given this conference nearly verbatim to your Lordship; and I was particularly anxious to do this correctly and minutely, as well that you may judge on the propriety of what I said myself, as that what M. Delacroix said to me may be accurately known, and remain on record.

It must, however, be remembered (as I observed in the beginning of this dispatch) that he spoke from himself, as Minister, indeed, but not under

the immediate instructions of the Directory; and this consideration will take a little away from the singularity of some of the positions he advanced.

I confess, my Lord, from the civility of his manners, and from his apparent readiness to discuss the subject, the impression which remained on my mind, on leaving him, was, that the negotiation would go on, but be liable to so many difficulties, and some of them so nearly insurmountable, that, knowing as I do the opinion of the Directory, I saw little prospect of its terminating successfully. But I did not expect the conduct of the Directory would immediately be such as to evince a manifest inclination, and even determination, to break off on the first proposals; and I was not a little surprized at receiving, on Sunday, at three P. M. the inclosed letter A from M. Delacroix. He sent it by the principal Secretary of his department (M. Guiraudet) who communicated to me the original of the arrêté of the Directory, of which this letter, abating the alteration in the form, is a literal copy. After perusing it, I asked M. Guiraudet, whether he was informed of its contents, and this led to a short conversation on them. I told him that both the demands were so unexpected, that I could not reply to them off hand; that, as to the first, it was quite unusual to sign memorials which were annexed to a note actually signed, and that I scarcely felt myself authorized to depart from what was, I believe, an invariable rule. That, as to the second demand, made in so peremptory and unprecedented a way, I could, without much hesitation, say, at once, that it could not be complied with. M. Guiraudet lamented this much, and said, that, this being the case, he feared our principles of negotiation would never coincide. I agreed with him in my expressions of concern. We conversed together afterwards for some time, but nothing passed at all worthy remark. I told him, I should send my answer the next day. On reflecting more attentively on the request that I would sign the two memorials which I had given in, it struck me that the complying with it pledged me to nothing, that it was merely gratifying them on a point insisted on peevishly, and that the doing it would put them still more in the wrong.

As to the strange demand of an ultimatum, it was perfectly clear what it became me to say; and I hope that in the inclosed answer B. (which I sent yesterday morning at twelve o'clock) to M. Delacroix, I shall be found to have adhered as closely as possible to the spirit of my instructions.

Yesterday evening, at half past nine, M. Guiraudet brought me the note C, to which I immediately replied by the note D. They require no comment; and as I intend leaving Paris to-morrow, and travelling with all convenient speed, I shall so soon have it in my power to say the little which remains to say relative to this sudden, though, perhaps, not unlooked-for, close to my mission, that I need not trespass any farther on your Lordship's patience.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) MALMESBURY.

P. S. I thought it would be proper for His Majesty's Minister at Vienna to receive the earliest intelligence of the negotiation being broken off, I therefore have dispatched a messenger to Vienna with a copy of the several papers which have passed between me and M. Delacroix since our conference, and also a succinct account of what passed on it. The messenger left this place to-day at three o'clock P. M.

Right Hon. Lord Grenville, &c.

M.

No. 31.

(A.)

SIR,

Paris, 28th Frimaire, (December 18) 5th year.

THE Executive Directory has heard the reading of the official note signed by you, and of two confidential memorials without signatures, which were annexed to it, and which you gave in to me yesterday. I am charged expressly by the Directory to declare to you, that it cannot listen to any confidential note without a signature, and to request of you to give in to me, officially, within four-and-twenty hours, your *ultimatum*, signed by you.

Accept, Sir, the assurance of my high consideration,

(Signed) CH. DELACROIX.

No. 32.

COPY. (B).

Paris, 19th December, 1796.

LORD MALMESBURY, in answer to the letter which the Minister for Foreign Affairs had the goodness to transmit to him through the hands of the Secretary General of his department, must remark, that in signing the official note which he gave in to that Minister, by order of his Court, he thought he had complied with all the usual formalities, and had given the necessary authenticity to the two confidential memorials which were annexed to it. Nevertheless, to remove all difficulties, as far as lies in his power, he willingly adopts the forms which are pointed out by the resolution of the Executive Directory, and hastens to send to the Minister for Foreign Affairs the two memorials signed by his hand.

With respect to the positive demand of an *ultimatum*, Lord Malmesbury observes, that insisting on that point in so peremptory a manner, before the two powers shall have communicated to each other their respective pretensions, and that the articles of the future treaty shall have been submitted to the discussions which the different interests which are to be adjusted necessarily demand, is to shut the door against all negotiation. He, therefore, can add nothing to the assurances which he has already given to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, as well by word of mouth, as in his official note; and he repeats, that he is ready to enter with that Minister into every explanation of which the state and progress of the negotiation may admit, and that he will not fail to enter into the discussion of the proposals of his Court, or of any counter project which may be delivered to him, on the part of the Executive Directory, with that candour and that spirit of conciliation which correspond with the just and pacific sentiments of his Court.

Lord Malmesbury requests the Minister for Foreign Affairs to accept the assurances of his high consideration.

No. 33.

(C.)

THE undersigned Minister for Foreign Affairs is charged by the Executive Directory to answer Lord Malmesbury's two notes of the 27th and 29th Frimaire, (17th and 19th December, O. S.) that the Executive Directory will listen to no proposals contrary to the constitution, to the laws, and to the treaties which bind the Republic.

And as Lord Malmesbury announces at every communication, that he is in want of the opinion of his Court, from which it results that he acts a part merely passive in the negotiation, which renders his presence at Paris useless: the undersigned is farther charged to give him notice to depart from Paris in eight-and-forty hours, with all the persons who have accompanied and followed him, and to quit, as expeditiously as possible, the territory of the Republic. The undersigned declares, moreover, in the name of the Executive Directory, that if the British Cabinet is desirous of peace, the Executive Directory is ready to follow the negotiations, according to the basis laid down in the present note, by the reciprocal channels of couriers.

(Signed)

CH. DELACROIX.

*Paris, 29th Frimaire (19th December)
5th year of the French Republic, one
and indivisible.*

No. 34.

(D.)

LORD MALMESBURY hastens to acknowledge the receipt of the note of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, dated yesterday. He is preparing to quit Paris to-morrow, and demands, in consequence, the necessary passports for himself and his suite.

He requests the Minister for Foreign Affairs to accept the assurances of his high consideration.

Paris, 20th Dec. 1796.

DECLARATION.

THE negotiation which an anxious desire for the restoration of peace had induced His Majesty to open at Paris, having been abruptly terminated by the French Government, the King thinks it due to himself and his people to state, in this public manner, the circumstances which have preceded and attended a transaction of so much importance to the general interests of Europe.

It is well known that early in the present year, His Majesty, laying aside the consideration of many circumstances of difficulty and discouragement, determined to take such steps as were best calculated to open the way for negotiation, if any corresponding desire prevailed on the part of his enemies. He directed an overture to be made in his name by his Minister in Switzerland, for the purpose of ascertaining the dispositions of the French Government with respect to peace. The answer which he received in return was at once haughty and evasive: it affected to question the sincerity of those dispositions of which His Majesty's conduct afforded so unequivocal a proof; it raised groundless objections to the mode of negotiation proposed by His Majesty (that of a general Congress, by which peace has so often been restored to Europe;) but it studiously passed over in silence His Majesty's desire to learn what other mode would be preferred by France. It at the same time asserted a principle, which was stated as an indispensable preliminary to all negotiation; a principle under which the terms of peace must have been regulated, not by the usual considerations of justice, policy, and reciprocal convenience; but by an implicit submission on the part of all other powers, to a claim founded on the internal laws and separate constitution of France, as having

full authority to supersede the treaties entered into by independent states, to govern their interests, to controul their engagements, and to dispose of their dominions.

A pretension in itself so extravagant, could in no instance have been admitted, nor even listened to for a moment. Its application to the present case led to nothing less than that France should, as a preliminary to all discussion, retain nearly all her conquests, and those particularly in which His Majesty was most concerned, both from the ties of interest, and the sacred obligations of treaties: that she should, in like manner, recover back all that had been conquered from her in every part of the world; and that she should be left at liberty to bring forward such farther demands, on all other points of negotiation, as such unqualified submission on the part of those with whom she treated could not fail to produce.

On such grounds as these, it was sufficiently evident that no negotiation could be established: neither did the answer of His Majesty's enemies afford any opening for continuing the discussion, since the mode of negotiation offered by His Majesty had been peremptorily rejected by them, and no other had been stated in which they were willing to concur.

His Majesty was, however, not discouraged even by this result from still pursuing such measures as appeared to him most conducive to the end of peace; and the wishes of his ally, the Emperor, corresponding with those which His Majesty had manifested, sentiments of a similar tendency were expressed on the part of his Imperial Majesty at the time of opening the campaign: but the continuance of the same spirit and principles on the part of the enemy rendered this fresh overture equally unsuccessful.

While the Government of France thus persisted in obstructing every measure that could even open the way to negotiation, no endeavour was omitted to mislead the public opinion throughout all Europe with respect to the real cause of the prolongation of the war, and to cast a doubt on those dispositions which could alone have dictated the steps taken by His Majesty and his august ally.

In order to deprive his enemies of all possibility of subterfuge or evasion, and in the hope that a just sense of the continued calamities of war, and of the increasing distresses of France herself, might at length have led to more just and pacific dispositions, His Majesty renewed in another form, and through the intervention of a friendly power, a proposal for opening negotiations for peace. The manner in which this intervention was received, indicated the most hostile dispositions towards Great Britain, and at the same time afforded to all Europe a striking instance of that injurious and offensive conduct which is observed on the part of the French Government towards all other countries. The repeated overtures made in His Majesty's name were nevertheless of such a nature, that it was at last found impossible to persist in the absolute rejection of them, without the direct and undisguised avowal of a determination to refuse to Europe all hope of the restoration of tranquillity. A channel was therefore at length indicated through which the Government of France professed itself willing to carry on a negotiation, and a readiness was expressed (though in terms far remote from any spirit of conciliation) to receive a Minister, authorized by His Majesty to proceed to Paris for that purpose.

Many circumstances might have been urged as affording powerful motives against adopting this suggestion, until the Government of France had given some indication of a spirit better calculated to promote the success of such a mission, and to meet these advances on the part of Great Bri-

tain. The King's desire for the restoration of general peace on just and honourable terms, his concern for the interests of his subjects, and his determination to leave to his enemies no pretext for imputing to him the consequences of their own ambition, induced him to overlook every such consideration, and to take a step which these reasons alone could justify.

The repeated endeavours of the French Government to defeat this mission in its outset, and to break off the intercourse thus opened, even before the first steps towards negotiation could be taken; the indecent and injurious language employed with a view to irritate; the captious and frivolous objections raised for the purpose of obstructing the progress of the discussion; all these have sufficiently appeared from the official papers which passed on both sides, and which are known to all Europe.

But above all, the abrupt termination of the negotiation has afforded the most conclusive proof, that at no period of it was any real wish for peace entertained on the part of the French Government.

After repeated evasion and delay, the Government had at length consented to establish, as the basis of the negotiation, a principle proposed by His Majesty, liberal in its own nature, equitable towards his enemies, and calculated to provide for the interests of his allies, and of Europe. It had been agreed that compensation should be made to France, by proportionable restitutions from His Majesty's conquests on that power, for those arrangements to which she should be called upon to consent, in order to satisfy the just pretensions of his allies, and to preserve the political balance of Europe. At the desire of the French Government itself, memorials were presented by His Majesty's Minister, which contained the outlines of terms of peace, grounded on the basis so established, and in which His Majesty proposed to carry to the utmost possible extent the application of a principle so equitable with respect to France, and so liberal on His Majesty's part. The delivery of these papers was accompanied by a declaration expressly and repeatedly made both verbally and in writing, that His Majesty's Minister was willing and prepared to enter, with a spirit of conciliation and fairness, into the discussion of the different points there contained, or into that of any other proposal or scheme of peace, which the French Government might wish to substitute in its place.

In reply to this communication, he received a demand, in form the most offensive, and in substance the most extravagant, that ever was made in the course of any negotiation. It was peremptorily required of him, that in the very outset of the business, when no answer had been given by the French Government to his first proposal, when he had not even learnt, in any regular shape, the nature or extent of the objections to it, and much less received from that Government any other offer or plan of peace, he should in twenty-four hours deliver in a statement of the final terms to which his Court would in any case accede. A demand tending evidently to shut the door to all negotiation, to preclude all discussion, all explanation, all possibility of the amicable adjustment of points of difference. A demand in its nature preposterous, in its execution impracticable, since it is plain that no such ultimate resolution respecting a general plan of peace ever can be rationally formed, much less declared, without knowing what points are principally objected to by the enemy, and what facilities he may be willing to offer in return for concession in those respects. Having declined compliance with this demand, and explained the

reasons which rendered it inadmissible, but having, at the same time, expressly renewed the declaration of his readiness to enter into the discussion of the proposal he had conveyed, or of any other which might be communicated to him, the King's Minister received no other answer than an abrupt command to quit Paris in forty-eight hours. If, in addition to such an insult, any farther proof were necessary of the dispositions of those by whom it was offered, such proof would be abundantly supplied from the contents of the note in which this order was conveyed. The mode of negotiation on which the French Government had itself insisted is there rejected, and no practicable means left open for treating with effect. The basis of negotiation so recently established by mutual consent is there disclaimed, and, in its room, a principle clearly inadmissible is re-asserted as the only ground on which France can consent to treat—the very same principle which had been brought forward in reply to His Majesty's first overtures from Switzerland, which had then been rejected by His Majesty, but which now appears never to have been, in fact, abandoned by the Government of France, however inconsistent with that on which they had expressly agreed to treat.

It is therefore necessary, that all Europe should understand, that the rupture of the negotiation at Paris does not arise from the failure of any sincere attempt on the part of France to reconcile, by fair discussion, the views and interests of the contending powers. Such a discussion has been repeatedly invited, and even solicited on the part of His Majesty, but has been, in the first instance, and absolutely, precluded by the act of the French Government.

It arises exclusively from the determination of that Government to reject all means of peace: a determination which appeared but too strongly in all the preliminary discussions; which was clearly manifested in the demand of an *ultimatum* made in the very outset of the negotiation; but which is proved beyond all possibility of doubt, by the obstinate adherence to a claim, which never can be admitted; a claim, that the constitution which that Government affects to put (though even in that respect unsupported by the fact) on the internal constitution of its own country, shall be received by all other nations, as paramount to every known principle of public law in Europe, as superior to the obligations of treaties, to the ties of common interest, to the most pressing and urgent considerations of general security.

On such grounds it is that the French Government has abruptly terminated a negotiation, which it commenced with reluctance, and conducted with every indication of a resolution to prevent its final success. On these motives it is, that the farther effusion of blood, the continued calamities of war, the interruptions of peaceable and friendly intercourse among mankind, the prolonged distresses of Europe, and the accumulated miseries of France itself, are by the government of that country so be justified to the world.

His Majesty, who had entered into the negotiation with good faith, who has suffered no impediment to prevent his prosecuting it with earnestness and sincerity, has now only to lament its abrupt termination; and to renew, in the face of all Europe, the solemn declaration, that, whenever his enemies shall be disposed to enter on the work of general pacification in a spirit of conciliation and equity, nothing shall be wanting on his part to contribute to the accomplishment of that great object, with a view to which he has already offered such considerable sacrifices on his part, and which is now retarded only by the exorbitant pretensions of his enemies.

Westminster, 27th Dec. 1796.

Mr. LONG presented the bill for the better Maintenance and Support of the Poor, and moved that the bill should be read a first time. Agreed to. Mr. Long then said, that Mr. Pitt, who was absent through indisposition, wished the bill to be read a first and second time, and committed before the recess, and recommitted after the recess. He therefore moved that the bill be read, now, a second time. Agreed to.

The commitment of the bill was ordered for Saturday.

Friday, 30th December.

Mr. WHITBREAD said, that as it was generally known that a Subsidiary Treaty at present existed, and had done so for some time, between His Majesty and the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, he was very much surprized so long a time should have elapsed without such treaty, or a copy thereof, having been laid on the table of that House. He therefore hoped the right honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer would explain the reason why the treaty had not been laid before the House.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that by some unexpected circumstances which had occurred, the ratifications had not been exchanged, which he believed was the reason why the treaty had not been laid on the table.

Mr. WHITBREAD moved, that a copy of the subsidiary treaty above mentioned, signed on the 9th of June, 1796, be laid before the House.

Agreed to.

Mr. WHITBREAD then said, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had given repeated proofs that he was determined on every occasion that he thought proper, to send the money of the people of this country out of the nation, for the purpose of subsidizing foreign Princes, or for any other purposes which he liked, without the knowledge or consent of Parliament. The nature of this treaty led him to suppose, that amongst the rest of the Princes, to whom money had in this way been remitted, there must almost of course be some to the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt. He therefore moved—

“ That an account be laid before the House of such sums, if any there were, as had been issued to the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, in consequence of the said treaty.”

Agreed to.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved the order of the day for taking into consideration His Majesty's message; it being accordingly read from the Chair, he addressed the House to the following effect.

The motion which it now becomes my duty to bring forward, in consequence of His Majesty's most gracious communication to this House, unquestionably involves in it many great and important considerations. Whatever difference of opinion may take place upon many of the topics to which I shall be under the necessity of advert-
ing, there is one circumstance on the present occasion, in which unfortunately we must all agree, in viewing with the deepest regret the sudden stop which has been put to that negotiation, by which we fondly hoped we should at last have been relieved from the contest in which we for some time past have been engaged; a contest into which we were forced against our will; a contest produced by the manifest and repeated aggressions of an imperious enemy; a contest undertaken on our part from motives of inevitable necessity; undertaken to preserve and maintain our independent rights and liberties as a nation; undertaken to preserve the very existence of our civil Constitution; undertaken in defence of the general policy and security of Europe; undertaken from a due and sacred regard to that good faith which we had pledged to our allies; it was, Sir, from the union of all these causes, from the combination of all these powerful motives, we were forced into a state of warfare, and while these causes and motives continued to operate, we likewise were determined to persevere. At the same time, however, that we were determined with manly courage to persevere, while war should continue to be a matter of necessity, it was a perseverance carried on under the hope and wish of accelerating and embracing the earliest opportunity of making a secure and permanent peace; but unfortunately, in consequence of what has recently taken place, we are for the present again disappointed. Whatever has been the cause of this disappointment, and the cause of it I shall presently have occasion to state, it is a disappointment which every man of reflection must deeply feel, and none surely more than myself. Additional anxiety, indeed, attaches itself to me in consequence of my personal situation; but, as I have just remarked, upon general principles of humanity, it must to every individual be a subject of the most sincere and unfeigned regret, disappointment, and mortification. Let me add, however, by way of consolation, that it is regret without despondency, it is disappointment without despair. We have not ourselves to blame for the misfortune; it arises from the absurd and exorbitant pretensions of our enemies. Let us now remember our duty we come here to perform; we are calmly and impartially to review the causes which have led to this event; we are to consider what are the sentiments which, from a review of these causes, we ought to be induced to entertain: what is the conduct we ought to

purſue ; what is the duty we have to perform to His Maſteſty ; and what additional efforts are ſtill neceſſary to be made. As to the next point which I ſhall have to conſider, I cannot expect equal unanimity ; not, however, that it is much more complicated, although, undoubtedly, not ſo ſelf-evident. I allude to the failure of the negotiation, in point of terms, and which renders a continuance of the war neceſſary ; but have we not the conſolation that the aggreſſion has uniformly been on the ſide of the enemy, and that nothing has been wanting on the part of this country to reſtore peace, on the grounds on which peace alone would be deſirable ? When we wiſh for peace, we wiſh for a ſecure and permanent peace, and the ſecure and permanent poſſeſſion of thoſe bleſſings with which peace is accompanied. If, with our ardent deſire of peace, we have qualified the ſteps which we have taken to procure it, by a due regard to theſe objects, we ſhall not find our endeavour has been without its advantage ; we ſhall have proved to all Europe, to whom ambitious and unreaſonable pretenſions ought to be aſcribed ; - we may expect from the reſult of ſuch a conduct to ſee England united, and France divided. In this queſtion, we ſhall have to conſider, not merely what has been our own conduct, or rather the conduct of that part of the Government which has the management of ſuch concerns, but we ſhall alſo have to conſider the conduct of the enemy in the manner in which our offers have been rejected, in the peremptory and abrupt manner in which the negotiation has been broken off ; in having, I ſay, injured your Ambaſſador, in having rejected your propoſitions, and not produced even the ſemblance of terms in return. Under all theſe circumſtances, I ſhall be aſtoniſhed to find that gentlemen have any thing to offer in palliation of ſuch an outrage. They cannot ſurely aſſume, or as ſtateſmen impreſſed with the feelings of genuine patriotiſm, alledge any thing in extenuation of ſo groſs an injury offered to this country. The two great conſiderations, then, Sir, are, firſt, what ſentiments ought we to expreſs to His Maſteſty on this occaſion ; and then combining the offers made by His Maſteſty with the conduct that has been adopted on the part of his enemies, what is the duty we are bound to perform for the purpoſe of ſecuring our own happineſs and proſperity, and preſerving our own liberties and independence. It will not be neceſſary, I preſume, to ſtate particularly the ſteps which were taken by His Maſteſty and his ally the Emperor, at an early period of the conteſt. We are all aware, that in March, 1796, an offer was made to treat in that way which has been the moſt accuſtomed, which has been ſanctioned by the uſage and practice, and approved by the general experience of

nations. That offer was met, on the part of the enemy, by advancing a Preliminary, which, whatever cavils, (excuse the expression,) whatever opinion may be entertained relative to it, by any Member of this House, is of such a nature, that no man living can seriously justify and support it. The answer to Mr. Wickham is founded upon what France chuses to call the law by which she is inviolably bound. What law? A private law of their own making, a mere internal regulation! This, Sir, is the assertion of a principle at once annulling all treaties, in open defiance of the independant rights of Europe, and the universally received maxims and laws of nations; such a principle can never be defended. It is stated in the recital of His Majesty's declaration, that His Majesty the Emperor, in spite of that answer, and which certainly more particularly applied to him, at the opening of the campaign, and subsequent to the expiration of the armistice, shewed his readiness to co-operate with His Britannic Majesty, in the same desirable pursuit. This offer, I observe, was made immediately after the armistice, at the beginning of this trying, this eventful year, the events of which have so completely established the high character of that Court and Monarch, at a time when his hopes were highest, and no reverse of fortune had yet taken place. How was this offer received? In the same manner our own was treated: not, indeed in all respects; for though the answer was nearly in the same tone, and talked of the insincerity of the offer, there were added several objections in point of form and etiquette as to the name and stile of the Directory. The result of the whole was, that they gave no credit to his sincerity; but if he was serious he might send a Plenipotentiary to Paris, to treat with them in a manner consistent with the laws of France! His Majesty has told the world in his declaration, that in spite of all these discouraging circumstances, yet in hopes that the calamities of war might at last create on the part of France, a disposition which might lead to peace, he, again, without any invitation from the enemy, without their having retracted one forbidding or unfriendly sentiment, renewed his proposal for opening a negotiation in another form. The circumstance deserves to be particularly mentioned. When debates took place here, whether it was at all consistent with policy to open a negotiation, it was contended that the mere idea of opening a negotiation by no means implied any thing humiliating. There were in practice, it was said, various ways of founding Courts and Governments, for the purpose of becoming acquainted with their real intentions and dispositions: but if there was any one mode more unexceptionable than another, it was that which was next adopted, an application through the me-

dium of a neutral Minister, in order to establish, on an equal footing, some reciprocal mode of mutual arrangement, and that neutral power was fixed upon, which some gentlemen were in the habit of quoting, as affording a striking illustration of the attention of France to the rights of neutral and independent nations. The Minister of the Court of Denmark made an application in the name of His Britannic Majesty, not even expressing a desire to know the disposition of the enemy, or the means by which a negotiation might be carried on, or any one point which might reciprocally be touched upon, but merely to know if they would send passports for a Plenipotentiary to be sent by His Majesty to Paris. How, Sir, was this application received? For some time no answer was made; at last the Danish Minister is informed, not by a written answer to a written note, but verbally, that if a Minister was sent, they might send him passports when he arrived at their frontiers! If there had been the most remote desire on the part of His Majesty and his Ministers to retard the progress of the negotiation, was not this enough to justify them in abandoning the attempt? From such a temper of mind being displayed on the part of the enemy, could they possibly have been blamed, had no farther overtures been made? But so anxious were they, if possible, to obtain the blessings of peace, that they resolved to surmount these difficulties, and a flag of truce was sent over, charged with a commission similar to what had been given to the Danish Minister. After a time, the request was granted by the French Government, not willingly, but of necessity—for from the various circumstances both antecedent and subsequent to former applications, they found themselves compelled to comply with it. We then had a way opened to bring forward propositions, but under circumstances which afforded no great hopes of leading to a speedy accommodation; rather the reverse. There could be but small expectations they would keep pace with our advances, as from the general complexion of the business, it appeared probable, that to afford any chance of success at all, it would remain with His Majesty to bring forward specific terms. In this difficult situation, the first object of His Majesty's Plenipotentiary was to do what is conformable to common sense and established usage in such cases, but which now became peculiarly necessary; I mean, to fix some acknowledged basis, upon which each party might come forward with some degree of certainty of arriving at the desired object. It is unnecessary surely to bring forward precedents to shew the propriety of this mode of conduct. How reasonable is it in itself, in order to avoid the labyrinth of impertinent or unnecessary discussion, that we should be furnished with a clue for our conduct and direc-

tion ! But how peculiarly necessary was it, when we had nothing to ask for ourselves, but, on the contrary, much to give away ? When, however, for our ally, there was something which in honour we were bound to ask ; when, for the general interests and public tranquillity of Europe, there was much to ask ! when we had to combat principles so hostile to the laws of nations, to the good faith of independent Powers, and the inviolability of the most important and sacred treaties. What then, Sir, is the basis proposed ? “ That compensation should be made to France by proportionable restitution from His Majesty’s conquests on that power, for those arrangements to which she should be called upon to consent in order to satisfy the just pretensions of his allies, and to preserve the political balance of Europe.” In this there is to be found no motive of low, sordid, and selfish interest ; we proposed to give up what the valour of England had acquired, not to aggrandize ourselves in any other manner, but to preserve our good faith to those who have a right to rely on it, and to promote the general security and happiness of Europe. To act on truer principles of national honour is utterly impossible. It does happen, Sir, that in the course of the discussion an additional proof is given of the inveterate disposition of the enemy ; before it could possibly be understood that this was meant to be rejected, they make a call on His Majesty’s Plenipotentiary for his ultimatum within twenty-four hours ; but this, either from the firm conduct which Lord Malmesbury adopted, or from some unknown prudential reason, was not insisted upon. Still, however, this basis was not agreed to. Let us recollect what was the opinion of the public on the occasion. I speak only of what was the general line of opinion, and I at least know not the person who was not persuaded that this basis was not acceded to on the part of the enemy. These, however, who, in this country, are in the habit of approving the conduct of the French, (I speak not now of what passes within these walls, but of the discussion which takes place in pamphlets and other publications,) those English Advocates of French principles and practice, openly condemned the offered basis as altogether unreasonable, and justified the conduct of the French in rejecting it. His Majesty’s Ministers, nevertheless, persevered : the French, at last, unequivocally acknowledged and received it, because, Sir, they could not refuse it upon any approved principle, and thus afforded the strongest possible proof of the offered basis being fair and reasonable. The basis being thus accepted and acknowledged, it became a question what should be the particular terms. According to the established usage of negotiation, particular terms are never mentioned by either party at the outset ; yet not-

withstanding all the advantages that had been given up, and all the concessions already made, what is the demand of the enemy? That without any disclosure of terms, or even opinion on their part, and merely after a slow and formal acknowledgement of the basis, His Majesty's Plenipotentiary should specifically bring forward the terms of the British Cabinet. It is unnecessary to state how great the preliminary difficulties in bringing forward terms are in all cases, consequently at all times it has been usual to divide them, and each party has offered his terms as nearly at the same time as possible. There is in any other mode a material advantage conceded, particularly when one party is thus called upon to give the value at which he estimates the conquests he has made; and how much more is this advantage augmented, when no real individual benefit is to be derived to the party making the proposition, and when he has to struggle against a manifest and rooted inveteracy and animosity on the part of the enemy! Notwithstanding all these discouragements, His Majesty's Plenipotentiary, in conformity to the established basis, and from the same motives by which he was all along actuated, delivered in two confidential notes, one signed, and the other not, but inclosed in that which was signed. The first relates to the terms of peace between this country and France; the other comprehends the interests of His Majesty's allies. They were thus separated; because, though upon the whole they are to be connected in any general view of the subject, yet they ought to be taken as originally different. In the first paper, mutual cessions are proposed and demanded. By a tide of adverse fortune on the continent, which afterwards indeed was in a considerable degree reversed, a great part of the Emperor's dominions, and some German Principalities, remained in possession of the French. On the other hand, by a similar tide of success on the part of this country, sometimes indeed interrupted and obstructed by temporary causes, but not materially, the valour of His Majesty's forces gave to this country, almost all the colonial possessions of the enemy; a success of which there are but two instances in the history of this country. In such circumstances, what was this country called upon to do? His Majesty's Ministers, feeling in the most sensible manner all the temporary evils arising from the war, the occasional stagnation of Commerce, and the embarrassments attending public and private credit, still felt that these distresses did not altogether proceed from that source to which they have been so frequently attributed; they were still sensible also of the truth of what it has been the fashion of some gentlemen to esteem a paradox, that accidental embarrassments produced no generally bad commercial consequences, no permanent distress,

no serious decay. When these temporary embarrassments began to disappear, the situation of the country gave us some well-grounded intimation of the real cause, and a spirit has been shewn, that never was exceeded. I do not state these circumstances, to give any one an idea that I do not ardently wish for peace, but to shew that we are not yet arrived at so deplorable a state of wretchedness and abasement, as to be compelled to make any insecure and dishonourable compromise. What, on the other hand, was the situation of the enemy? They at first indeed were enabled to employ gigantic means of support, which, from their extravagant nature, were temporary, not permanent. They find also the additional expedient of disseminating new, unheard of, destructive principles; these they poured fourth from the interior of France, into all the quarters of Europe, where no rampart could be raised to oppose the dangerous, the fatal inundation. Although madness and fanaticism carried them thus far for a time, yet no rational man will deny that those persons formed a fair and reasonable conclusion, who thought that such resources could not be attended with either duration or stability. I need hardly recur to the subject of French finance, though it has a very considerable effect indeed upon the question. I have on this subject been accused of bringing forward groundless surmises, of using fanciful reasoning, of stating elaborate theories without authority. I have even been complimented on my dexterity at this sort of argument, for the kind purpose of afterwards converting it into ridicule; but I shall not now stop to confirm what in this respect I have formerly asserted; I may surely, however, suppose that the admissions of the Executive Directory are true, particularly when officially conveyed in the form of a message to one of their councils. Are we told by themselves, that the only pay of their troops are the horrors of nakedness and famine; that their state contractors, their judges, and all other public functionaries, receive no part of their salaries; that the roads are impassable, that the public hospitals and general interests of charity are totally neglected, that nothing, in short, remains in a state of organization but murder and assassination? Is this a true picture drawn by themselves, and can this be the time for Europe to prostrate itself at the foot of France? An honourable Baronet (Sir W. Pulteney) formerly expressed a doubt whether we ought to have gone so far as we did without the immediate co-operation of the Emperor; I shall not argue the point, but make use of the opinion, and assert that these considerations I have now mentioned, furnish strong ground of argument why in the present situation we ought not to desert a magnanimous Prince, why we ought not to destroy the balance of power in Europe. The

preservation of this balance of power, it is said, has produced all the wars of Europe for two hundred years past, and yet we may be perhaps desired by some gentlemen on the present occasion to concede what, on the justest principle, never could be conceded by our ancestors consistently with general peace and security, and what was maintained by them at so great an expence of blood and treasure; and at what time are we to make this concession? when the enemy himself comes forward absolutely *in forma pauperis*, and yet demands all that would be due to the greatest and most brilliant success. I now proceed to consider what we have demanded under the circumstances above stated. We had nothing, Sir, of our own to demand; we demanded the return of no antient possessions; we sued not for liberty to maintain our independence, to reject the fraternal embrace, and prevent the organization of treason. These do not rest upon the permission of the enemy; they depend upon the valour, the intrepidity and the patriotism of the people of this country. We desired, Sir, only to preserve our good faith inviolate, and were ready to sacrifice all our own advantages, to obtain what we could not honourably give away without the consent of the Emperor. Could we possibly ask less at the outset of a negotiation? I touch, no doubt, upon a delicate subject, but I ask, could we even have demanded the consent of the Emperor to ask less? Whatever might have been the disposition of the Emperor to peace, would he have been content to agree to inferior terms, when the campaign was not yet closed—when the enemy were yet struck with the effects of the brilliant and glorious success with which the Imperial arms have lately been attended on the side of the Rhine, when the exertions in Italy might have been expected to communicate to the affairs of Austria in that quarter, the same tide of victory by which the frontiers of Germany were distinguished? Could we have asked less, consistently with the good faith we owe to that ally, to whose exertions and to whose victories we have been so much indebted; that ally to whom we are so closely bound by congenial feelings, with whom we participate in the glory of adversity retrieved, and of prosperity restored? In doing this, I am confident the House will agree in thinking that we do not do too much. By the terms proposed all the territory between the Rhine and the Moselle was to be ceded by France, subject to future modification. When the French conquests in Italy were stated as objects of restitution, it was not from that to be inferred that Savoy and Nice were included, for in no geographical view could they be considered as component parts of that country. All the propositions underwent discussion between the Plenipotentiary of His Majesty and the French Minister; only

the British Minister, informed the Minister of France, that as to the Netherlands, His Majesty could, on no account, retract any part of his propositions, but that every thing else should be subject to modification. These offers, Sir, I maintain to have been extremely liberal in their principle, and more so, when we consider the application of it. We carried the principle of compensation to the fullest extent, when we offered to give up all that we had taken, reserving one subject only for consideration, which depended on a treaty, and which I shall presently mention; and we asked no more than what by the strictest ties of justice and honour we were bound to demand. Let me appeal to every one present if this conduct was not fair, just, and reasonable; if it did not bespeak sincere intentions and an anxious wish on the part of His Majesty to procure peace, consistently with good faith and security to himself and his allies, and if it was not entitled to a candid reception from the enemy! As to the value of the French possessions which we offered to give up, it must be confessed that the same evils with which France has been afflicted have been extended to the colonial possessions; they have undoubtedly been much depreciated, much impoverished; but after all, they are of infinite importance to the commerce and marine of France. The valuable post of St. Domingo; the military and commercial advantages of Martinique; the peculiarly favourable military situation of St. Lucia; the importance of Tobago to this country; when we combine these, and place them in an united point of view, we have some reason to doubt whether there was not some degree of boldness on the part of His Majesty's Ministers to make such overtures; we have some reason to suspect the wisdom of the measure, rather than to cavil at the insufficiency of the offer. I come now more particularly to mention what relates to the Spanish part of St. Domingo, in the late negotiation. By a former treaty with Spain, made at the peace of Utrecht, in the year 1713, Spain engages not to alienate any of her possessions in America and the West Indies, without the consent of Great Britain. Have we not then a right to take advantage of this circumstance, on the present occasion, and to hold out our consent to this alienation, as a part of the compensation offered on the part of this country? In what consists the right of the French to the Spanish parts of St. Domingo? Is it the right of possession? No! they never yet have been in possession; is it then merely the right of title? No! for their title is derived from the alienation of the Spaniards, who had no right to transfer it without the consent of this country. But it may be said that this treaty is old and obsolete; on the contrary, having been kept sacred up to the year 1796, it has gained strength by a long prescrip-

tion ; besides it has been recognized and confirmed at the end of every war since that time, and particularly so in the definitive treaty of 1783. But it may be objected, and has indeed been urged on this occasion, that England herself has violated this treaty in the transaction of Pensacola and Florida ; but this argument depends upon an obvious fallacy. The agreement with respect to Spanish dominions in America and the West Indies was made between this country and Spain ; now, although the two parties to the agreement may, by consent at pleasure, modify their respective interests, it does not follow that either party can, without the consent and to the disadvantage of the other, introduce the interests of third parties. Upon every view of this subject, then, I ask if we have not a fair and reasonable right to avail ourselves of the advantages arising to us from the treaty of Utrecht ? Sir, I think, that from the great extent of the subject, it will be unnecessary for me to trouble the House with any farther observation on that part of it ; but I must request the attention of the House to the nature of the terms proposed with respect to the meditated peace between this country and her allies ; and first with respect to Holland, a country which, although now hostile to us, I cannot help considering as having, at the commencement of the present war, been concerned in alliance with us in carrying it on, and connected in our interest by every tie of internal policy—a country which is now only opposed to us in consequence of the restraint imposed by the overbearing arms of France. However, Sir, notwithstanding Holland was our ally, and an ally, whose protection against the common enemy was one of the causes of our entering into the war ; yet, as circumstances have occurred, which have compelled Holland to become the enemy of this country, I must, of necessity, treat her as such ; I must consider her in the relation, in which she stands with respect to France, though at the same time I cannot bring myself to forget she was formerly an ally, whose friendship was attended with reciprocal advantages to herself and to this country. I am satisfied, if it were possible to replace Holland in the situation in which she formerly stood, and to restore her legitimate government, not nominally, but permanently and effectually, that such a restoration would undoubtedly redound to the advantage of this country. But as it is perhaps a question of too remote contingency to consider the advantage which we should acquire by the restoration of Holland to her former system, such an event, either nominally or really, being extremely unlikely under the present aspect of things, I shall therefore refrain from arguing the point. Now, Sir, as to the conduct pursued on the part of this country, with regard to her connections with other powers, and sup-

posing for the present that Holland may for a time remain subject to France, I may be allowed to assert that the terms proposed by this country, on behalf of her allies, were such as could only be dictated by a principle of moderation, of disinterestedness, and earnest desire for peace. This country having nothing to ask for herself, was induced to surrender a considerable part, nay almost the whole of her acquisitions, for the purpose of inducing the French to give up to our allies that territory she has wrested from them.

But with respect, to the principle of compensation to Holland, nothing better could have been adopted, than not to give to Holland a part of the foreign possessions which we had taken from her; possessions which Holland had no right to ask for itself, and which France had no right to demand for Holland. We ought to consider that those possessions, with regard to which no relation was to be admitted, were to be retained, in order that they might not become acquisitions to the French Government. In refusing to yield them up, we only refuse to put into the hands of the enemy the means of carrying into effect the deep-laid schemes of ambition they have long cherished, and the plan they have conceived of undermining our Indian empire, and destroying our Indian commerce, by ceding out of our own hands, what may be deemed the bulwark of the wealth of this country, and the security of the Indian empire. These, indeed, were refused to be given up to our enemies; but every thing else which the valour and the arms of this country had acquired, which was valuable, was proposed to be made matter of negotiation. This, Sir, was the nature of the propositions made at the very first moment when the negotiation was commenced: and I again submit to the final decision of the House, whether a proposition, including the restoration of every thing valuable which we had acquired, except that which we could not forego without manifest detriment to the most important interests of the country, in liberality, and sincerity. Sir, I must beg leave to observe, that on this part of the subject I have been the more anxious to be explicit, because it is that part on which I lay the more particular stress, as tending to prove to the House, that every thing was done at the commencement, every thing distinctly stated, on which this country was willing to enter upon a negotiation. I am the more desirous of impressing the House with this part of my argument, because I feel it material in order to enable them to form a determinate precise idea of the character and prominent features of the negotiation itself. In return to the statements of compensation proposed by this country, the French Government presented no *projet* of their own, they afforded no room for discussion, because they

were actuated by motives very distant from conciliation. This much I have thought it necessary to state, in vindication of the character of myself and colleagues, that the House may be enabled to see that we never lost sight of the idea of a peace advantageous for our allies, safe for Europe, and honourable to this country. With regard to any specific terms of peace, which it might be proper to adopt or refuse, I do not think it would be wise for the House to pronounce. This may still be considered as a dormant negotiation, capable of being renewed; and it would be impolitic to give a pledge to any specific terms to which it might be impossible to adhere, and which can never be incurred without rashness. No man can be pledged to any particular terms, because in these he must be guided by a view of collateral circumstances, and a comparative statement of resources. All that I wish Parliament to pronounce is, that they will add their testimony to the sincerity with which His Majesty has endeavoured to restore peace to Europe, and their approbation of the steps which were employed for its attainment. But even after their rejection of every proposition that was advanced, after all the difficulties they started, after all the cavils they employed, after all the discouragements which they presented, when, at last, the French Government had been compelled to open the discussion, the first thing that happens, after requiring a note containing specific proposals, is a captious demand to have it signed by Lord Malmesbury. This demand was complied with to deprive them of every pretence for breaking off the negotiation, and immediately they call for an *ultimatum* in twenty-four hours. The impossibility of complying with such a demand is obvious. Was it possible to reconcile discordancies, to smooth opposition, or pronounce good understanding in this manner? Does it come within the scope of the negotiation? Is an *ultimatum*, which means that demand which is to come the nearest to the views of all parties, and to state the lowest terms which could be offered, thus to be made out at random, without knowing what the enemy would concede on their part, or what they would accept on ours? A proposal, drawn up in such a manner, without explanation, without information, could have no good effect. It is a demand contrary to all reason and to all principle. With such a demand, therefore, it was impossible to comply; and in consequence of this, Lord Malmesbury received orders to quit Paris in forty-eight hours, and the territories of the Republic as soon as possible.

Perhaps, however, I shall be told, that the negotiation is not broken off, and that the French Government have pointed out a new basis upon which they are still willing to proceed. There are

two things upon this subject not unworthy of consideration. The time at which they propose this 'new' basis, and what sort of basis it is that they propose. After having approved and acted upon the basis proposed by His Majesty's Government; after having acknowledged, and, to all appearance, cordially acquiesced in it, as the ground of negotiation; after having demanded an *ultimatum* at the very commencement of this negotiation, and before any discussion had taken place, to be delivered in to the Directory, in the space of twenty-four hours; and after dismissing the Ambassador of the King with every mark of ignominy and insult, they propose a new basis, by which the negotiation is to be carried on by means of couriers. And what is the reason they assign for this new basis? Because Lord Malmesbury acted in a capacity purely passive, and because he could assent to nothing without dispatching couriers to obtain the sanction of his Court. Here one cannot help remarking the studied perverseness of the temper of the French Government. When a courier was dispatched to Paris, at the instance of the Minister of a neutral power, in order to get a passport from the French Government, it was denied. A courier could not even obtain a passport, though the application was made to the Executive Directory through the medium of the Danish Minister. The request of the Danish Minister was not enough; nothing would satisfy them but a British Minister. Well, a British Minister was sent. At the commencement of the negotiation he had occasion frequently to send dispatches to his Court, because it is very well known that there are a great number of difficulties which attend the opening of every negotiation, and because Lord Malmesbury had been sent to Paris before the preliminaries, which are usually settled by means of couriers, were arranged. While these preliminaries were in a course of settling, Lord Malmesbury's presence was barely endured, and the frequent dispatches of his couriers were subjects of animadversion; but no sooner were these preliminaries settled, and the British Minister delivered in a *projet*, when there was less necessity for dispatching couriers, when the period for discussion was arrived, when the personal presence of an Ambassador was particularly necessary, and when the King's Ministers announced to the French Government that he was prepared to enter into discussion upon the official memorials containing his *projet*, than he was ordered to quit Paris, and leave the negotiation to be carried on by means of couriers. Such is the precise form, and it was impossible to devise a better, in which a studied insult, refined and matured by the French Directory, was offered to his Britannic Majesty. I now come to state the broad plain ground on which the question rests, as

far as the terms upon which we are invited to treat on this new basis are concerned. After having started a variety of captious objections at the opening of the negotiation, after the preliminaries were with much difficulty adjusted, after an *ultimatum* was demanded, almost before discussion had commenced, after the King's Minister was ordered, in the most insulting manner, to leave the territories of France, after a retraction by the Executive Directory of the original basis of negotiation, and the substitution of a new one in its place, they demand not as an *ultimatum*, but as a preliminary, to be permitted to retain all those territories of which the chance of war has given them a temporary possession, and respecting which they have thought proper, contrary to every principle of equity and the received laws of nations, to pass a constitutional law, declaring, as they interpret it, that they shall not be alienated from the Republic. Now whether this be the principle of their Constitution or not, upon which I shall afterwards have occasion to make some observations, it was at least naturally to be supposed that the principle had been virtually set aside when the former basis of negotiation was recognized by the French Directory; for it must have been a strange admission of the principle of reciprocal compensations indeed, if they were obliged by the rules of their Constitution to retain all those conquests which we were most bound in duty and in honour to insist upon their giving up, (not by any mystery of a new Constitution, which is little known, and even among those who know it, of doubtful interpretation, but by public and known engagements); and if they were under the same constitutional necessity, which they certainly are, of demanding the restitution of those colonies formerly in their possession, but which they have lost in the course of the war. Notwithstanding, however, their disavowal of this principle in the admission of the former basis of the negotiation, it is now alledged as a ground for the pretension, that they are entitled, as a matter of right, to demand from this country, not as an ultimatum, but as a preliminary to the discussion of any articles of treaty, that we shall make no proposals inconsistent with the laws and constitution of France. I know of no law of nations which can in the remotest degree countenance such a perverse and monstrous claim. The annexation of territory to any State by the Government of that State during the continuance of the war in which they have been acquired, can never confer a claim which supersedes the treaties of their powers, and the known and public obligations of the different nations of Europe. It is impossible, in the nature of things, that the separate act of a separate Government can operate to the dissolution of the ties

subsisting between other Governments, and to the abrogation of treaties previously concluded : and yet this is the pretension to which the French Government lay claim, and the acknowledgement of which they hold out not as an ultimatum, but as a preliminary of negotiation to the King of Great Britain and his allies. In my opinion there is no principle of the law of nations clearer than this, that when, in the course of war any nation acquires new possessions, that such nation has only temporary right to them, and that they do not become property till the end of the war. This principle is incontrovertible, and founded upon the nature of things. For, supposing possessions thus acquired to be immediately annexed to the territory of the state by which the conquest was made, and that the conqueror was to insist upon retaining them, because he had passed a law that they should not be alienated, might not the neighbouring powers, or even the hostile power, ask—Who gave you a right to pass this law ? What have we to do with the regulations of your municipal law ? Or, what authority have you, as a separate state, by any annexation of territory to your dominions, to cancel existing treaties, and to destroy the equilibrium established among nations ? Were this pretension to be tolerated, it would be a source of eternal hostility, and a perpetual bar to negotiation between the contending parties ; because the pretensions of the one would be totally irreconcilable with those of the other. This pretension in the instance of France has been as inconsistent in its operations as it was unfounded in its origin. The possessions which they have lost in the West Indies in the course of the war, they made independent Republics ; and what is still more singular, Tobago, which they have lost in the war, and which is retained by British arms, is a part of indivisible France. I should not be surprised to hear that Ireland, in consequence of the rumour which has been circulated of their intention to attempt an invasion upon that country, is constitutionally annexed to the territories of the Republic, or even that the city of Westminster is a part of indivisible France. There is a distinction, no doubt, between the Netherlands and the West-India Islands, but it whimsically happens that this principle of law, that this constitutional pretension is least applicable to those possessions upon which it is held out as operating by the French Government, and that the Austrian Netherlands, even by the letter of their own Constitution, ought to be exempted from its operation. I own I am little qualified to read a lecture upon the French Constitution, and perhaps I shall be accused, in my interpretation of it, of pretending to understand it better than they do themselves. Here I must remind my accusers, however, that even M. Delacroix, that great

master of the law of nations, allows that, on this point, the Constitution is not perfectly clear : and gives that particular interpretation of it upon the authority of the best publicists. I again repeat it—that, in discussing the terms of a treaty with France, I am not obliged to know either her Constitution or laws, because it was unreasonable for her to advance a pretension upon a foundation inconsistent with the received law of nations and the established nature of things. But it will demonstrate their insincerity and the shallowness of the subterfuges to which they have been obliged to have recourse, if I can shew that no such law is in existence, and that their Constitution leaves the Government entirely at liberty to dispose of the possessions which they have acquired in war in any way they may think proper. I have looked through this voluminous code (holding a copy of the Constitution in his hand), and I think it may be considered as an instance that a Constitution upon paper, digesting and regulating the conduct of municipal jurisprudence as well as of foreign relations, does not lead to the best application of the true principles of political œconomy. In the copy of their Constitution all I find upon the subject is a declaration that France is one and indivisible, which is followed by a long list of departments. And here I would recommend it to gentlemen to read the report upon which this decree was founded, in which they will find that it was passed for the avowed purpose of obtaining for France an indisputable ascendant in Europe, and of suppressing the trade and commerce of rival nations. Overlooking, however, the principle of the decree, if it was found inapplicable to the possessions of the French in the East and West Indies, which they had previous to the war, it was certainly much more inapplicable to the Austrian Netherlands, of which they have got possession in the course of the war, and therefore the Government in holding out the principle as operating upon the latter, and not to the former, apply it to that part of their territory to which it is least applicable. If we look at the provisions under the next title, *respecting relations with foreign powers*, the argument against the existence of any such principle in their Constitution is confirmed : for we find the Executive Government is there vested with the full power of treating, but all their treaties must be ratified by the legislative bodies, with the singular exception of secret articles, which it is in the power of the Directory to put in execution without being ratified, a proof that they are authorized by the Constitution to alienate territories belonging to the Republic. Allowing, however, that it is a principle of their Constitution, is it an evil without a remedy? No. M. Delacroix confesses that it may be remedied, but not without the inconvenience of cal-

ling the primary assemblies. And are we then, after all the exertions that we have made in order to effect the object of general pacification, and after being baffled in all our efforts by the stubborn pride and persevering obstinacy of the French Government, after our propositions have been slighted, and our Ambassador insulted, are we now to consent to sacrifice our engagements, and to violate our treaties, because, forsooth, it would be attended with some inconvenience for them to call their primary assemblies, in order to cancel a law which is incompatible with the principle of fair negotiation? Shall we forget our own honour, our own dignity, and our own duty, so far as to acquiesce in a principle as a preliminary to negotiation, intolerable in its tendency, unfounded in fact, inconsistent with the nature of things, and inadmissible by the law of nations? But this is not all the sacrifice they demand. This is not all the degradation to which they would have us submit. You must also engage, and as a preliminary too, to make no propositions which are contrary to the laws of the Constitution, and the *treaties* which bind the Republic. Here they introduce a new and extraordinary clause, imposing a restriction still more absurd and unreasonable than the other. The Republic of France may have made secret treaties which we know nothing about, and yet that Government expects that we are not to permit our propositions to interfere with these treaties. In the former instance we had a text upon which to comment, but here we are in the state of those diviners who were left to guess at the dreams which they were called upon to interpret. How is it possible for this country to know what secret articles there may be in the treaty between France and Holland? How can we know what the Dutch may have ceded to France, or whether France may not have an oath in heaven never to give up the territories ceded to her by Holland? Who can know but her treaty with Spain contains some secret article guaranteeing to the latter the restitution of Gibraltar, or some important possession now belonging to His Majesty? And how can I know whether the performance of all these engagements may not be included under the pretension which the French Government now holds out? How is it possible for me to sound where no line can fathom? And even after you have acceded to these preliminaries, in what situation do you stand? After accepting of terms of which you are entirely ignorant, and giving up all that it is of importance for you to keep, you at last arrive at a discussion of the Government which France may chuse to give to Italy, and of the fate which she may be pleased to assign to Germany. In fact, the question is not, how much you will give for peace, but how much disgrace you will suf-

fer at the outset, how much degradation you will submit to as a preliminary? In these circumstances, then, are we to persevere in the war with a spirit and energy worthy of the British name and of the British character; or are we, by sending couriers to Paris, to prostrate ourselves at the feet of a stubborn and supercilious Government, to do what they require, and to submit to whatever they may impose? I hope there is not a hand in His Majesty's Councils who would sign the proposals, that there is not a heart in this House who would sanction the measure, and that there is not an individual in the British dominions who would act as the courier.

Mr. Chancellor Pitt concluded with moving an address to His Majesty, which was, as usual, an echo of the message.

The honourable THOMAS ERSKINE said, that when the right honourable gentleman first rose to move his address, he had hoped to have found it very different to what, on hearing it read, it turned out to be. He had hoped, that instead of binding the House to an engagement to His Majesty to prosecute the war with vigour, that it would have bore a resemblance to a passage of the right honourable gentleman's speech in an early stage of it, in which he said, "That he did not wish to pledge the House to any specific time or period to which the war ought to be protracted, or to any particular and specific terms which ought to be insisted on by the allies." The right honourable gentleman, however, by this address, would precisely draw the House, if they should agree to adopt it, into that very situation to which he had said he would not wish to pledge them. There were two propositions in the right honourable gentleman's speech, which he wished particularly to controvert. He would allow that the situation of the right honourable gentleman was, in some degree, critical, and that in the argument he made use of, he would naturally be led to say every thing he possibly could in favour of his own country. He believed, that as an individual, he himself might, from that general attachment which a man bears to the country in which he was born, and afterwards educated, be induced to use every partial and favourable argument in which there was any dispute between France and Britain, in support of his own country. But, standing there as a representative of the people, and speaking to a point in which not only his own happiness and interest, but the interest and happiness of the whole people of this kingdom were so deeply concerned—it became his duty to speak what he believed to be the real truth, though that should, in some degree, militate against the justice of the proceedings of this country. The first of the two propositions, then, which he meant to controvert, was, "That France was the ag-

gressor," as had been asserted by the right honourable gentleman in the course of his speech, "in the present bloody and expensive war." The right honourable gentleman had not only asserted that France was the aggressor, but he had gone farther, and declared, that all the obstacles which had been thrown in the way of the late negotiations, were entirely to be attributed to the pride, ambition, and arrogant demands of the present Government of France. How did this matter stand at the commencement of the war? Ministers advised His Majesty, that it was incompatible with the interests of this country that Belgium should be permitted to be united with France. This was immediately communicated to the French Government at that time, and they unequivocally disavowed every thing which Ministers pretended to fix upon them. In all disputes between individuals, between neighbours, it was always found necessary by those who were applied to, or whose particular province it might prove to be, from any circumstances whatever, to adjust their differences, to inquire into the particular circumstances which were the original cause of those differences. Without coming at those, it would be impossible to judge fairly, and to do ample justice between the parties. This became the more necessary, if those disputes were of a mixed and complicated nature. In like manner, where negotiations were to be entered upon between two contending powers, it must be equally, or, perhaps, more necessary, to look back, in order to ascertain precisely what was the situation of the parties at the commencement of their quarrel; what was the aggression, what the extent of it, and by whom made. The right honourable gentleman, with that dexterity which was peculiarly his own, with those great abilities from which he did not wish to detract, and with that consummate knowledge which he possessed of the temper of the House, had represented as if the House of Commons would be only pledged for a time to support the continuance of the war, whereas he sincerely believed that there would be no limits to its duration till we are overtaken by calamities, to the pressure of which we shall be compelled to yield, and till we become the victims of a necessity which has no law. The right honourable gentleman well knew how far his powers of eloquence would go in obtaining the admiration of those around him; he likewise was perfectly aware how necessary his dexterity of argument became, when he wanted to lead gentlemen a few steps beyond what their admiration might induce them to go. He had therefore exerted all the powers with which he was so largely endowed to establish this position in the minds of gentlemen, that the French were the aggressors. Let us then, said he, look back—let

us refer to the period alluded to, and see how matters were actually circumstanced. On the 12th of December, 1792, His Majesty met the Parliament: at that time Mons. Chauvelin, the Ambassador of the French Government, was then in England. His Majesty, in the speech from the Throne to both Houses of Parliament, complained of three things: First, "that the French had sent seditious missionaries into this country;" secondly, "that they meditated an invasion to Holland;" and thirdly, "that they had interfered in opening the Scheldt." He begged the House to recollect, that at that particular period of time Belgium was in the possession of the French, though not as now; it was not then engrafted by the Constitution into the territory of France as an integral part of it. At that time all the correspondence between Lord Grenville and the French Ambassador was concealed from the House, though M. Chauvelin had given separate and satisfactory answers to all the complaints entertained by this Court. He entreated that the King would bring to condign punishment those who disseminated sedition in his dominions, announced the determination of France to keep within her own limits, and to respect the rights of other nations. Notwithstanding this plain and specific disavowal, however, of all the grounds of hostility, war was declared upon France. At that time Belgium was not in her possession. He asked then, whether France could be considered as the aggressor, who offered peace to this country on terms which the right honourable gentleman would be worshipped as a God if he could now procure?—[Here Mr. Erskine stopped, and sat down under evident symptoms of indisposition.]

Mr. FOX. Sorry, indeed, am I on account of my learned and honourable friend, whose indisposition has now compelled him to sit down; sorry for the sake of the House, whose information, from the train of argument which he had adopted, has been thus unpleasantly interrupted; and sorry for the cause of peace and Great Britain, which Ministers, by their imprudent counsels, and infatuated policy, seem determined to push to the last verge of ruin, that I am obliged to address the House on the present occasion. I feel it, however, incumbent upon me to come forward in the present instance, knowing that my opinion on the subject entirely coincides with that of my honourable friend who has now sat down, but lamenting, that in consequence of his indisposition, the argument on this momentous question must considerably suffer from the want of that conviction and ability with which it would have been enforced by his superior powers. I need not state that the business is of the utmost importance, that the occasion is such, as though we may not

think it necessary to contemplate with despondency and despair, we cannot survey but with the most serious considerations, and with feelings of the deepest regret. After a war of four years, which is stated to have been attended with many occurrences highly honourable and advantageous to the British arms, and to have been accompanied with no disgrace, after the immense expenditure incurred in the prosecution of hostilities, an expenditure which undoubtedly has been greatly aggravated by the extravagance of those concerned in superintending the plan of operation; after an addition of a sum of no less than two hundred millions to the national debt, and of nine millions to the permanent taxes of the country; after an enormous effusion of human blood; after an incalculable addition to the details of human wretchedness, so far are we from having gained any point, or any object for which we set out in the war, so far are we from having achieved any advantage, that the Minister has to-night come forward in a most elaborate speech, which lasted for a considerable space, (and when I say that it lasted long, I do not mean to infer that it was not heard with pleasure,) and after all this expenditure of blood and treasure, which has taken place in the contest, has endeavoured to prove, that the only effect has been, that the enemy have become more unreasonable than ever in their pretensions, and that all hopes of peace are removed to a still greater distance. You are now not allowed to hope for the restoration of peace, unless some change is wrought by the events of war. And at what period is this prospect brought forward? After a war of four years, which so far from having produced any favourable change in the dispositions of the enemy, if we may trust to the representations of the right honourable gentleman, has only served to increase the insolence of their stile, and the exorbitance of their pretensions. The same necessity is still stated to exist for the continuance of the war. It would have been some consolation, if after the right honourable gentleman had stated at such length, and with such an elaborate display of eloquence, the exorbitant pretensions of the enemy, he had suggested some means of reducing them. But, good God, how striking is the contrast! In this speech of three hours, I find only one solitary sentence which is at all calculated to afford any hope of a satisfactory issue to the present unfortunate contest. And of what materials does the remainder of the speech consist? It is merely a revival of opinions by which we have been led on from year to year, and by which we have found ourselves constantly deluded. We are left in the same hopeless state with respect to the attainment of the object of the contest. The right honourable gentleman says, that he had formerly given a representation of the de-

plorable situation of the French finances from uncertain documents, but that he is now enabled to confirm the same representation from the most indubitable authority—the statement of the Directory. I am apt to believe that the documents of the right honourable gentleman in both instances are equally authoritative. Formerly he proceeded on the speeches of leading Members of the Convention, and on Official Reports. He now grounded his statement on a publication of the Directory. If his authority has failed him in former instances, what force can he now attach to conclusions drawn from similar premises. It has been found from experience, that in proportion as the finances of the French have been acknowledged, even by themselves, to be reduced to the lowest ebb, in the same proportion have their exertions been found to be wonderful and unparalleled. Now the right honourable gentleman builds his conclusion of the certain ruin of the French finance on an immediate statement from the Directory. I wonder that he does not go farther, and quote the very ingenious letter of Lord Malmesbury, in which he reports the conversation that took place between him and M. Delacroix. (By the bye, said Mr. Fox, we shall probably soon have another account of this said conversation, through the medium of the French papers). In this conversation the French Minister is represented as having paid the highest compliments to the extensive means possessed by this country, as having described it from its internal sources of wealth, and from its colonies in the Indies, to be mistress of almost boundless resources. Thus while the Directory admit that Great Britain is distinguished by her wealth, and full of resources, they have no hesitation to acknowledge their own poverty and embarrassments. They acknowledge to all Europe, that from the want of money, the army is considerably in arrears, and every branch of the internal administration under circumstances of the greatest embarrassment and distress. They at the same time allow to this country all the advantages of an augmented commerce, and of increasing opulence and prosperity. In this House we have heard France represented as sometimes in the gulph, and sometimes at the verge of bankruptcy; and it is rather curious, that at different periods we should have heard it alternately described at one time as in the very gulph, and at another as at the verge of bankruptcy. But while they admit the ruined state of their own finances, what a striking contrast do their exertions in their present contest, and the success which has followed from their operations, afford to the conduct and fate of those who have been entrusted with the management of the war on the part of this country; whilst we, in every quarter, which it was deemed

most important to defend, have been losing city after city ; whilst we have been equally driven from the possessions which we conceived to be necessary to the security of our commerce, or to the balance of power, France, resourceless and dispirited, all the while avowing its own distressed situation with respect to finance, and talking in the most respectful terms of our wealth and resources, has been constantly adding to its acquisitions, and aggrandising its empire. France appears, in the present moment, as the Conqueror of most extensive and important territories ! Belgium is annexed to her empire, great part of Italy has yielded to the force of her arms, and Holland is now united to the fate of the Republic by ties of the strictest alliance. If, indeed, these acquisitions were to be regained to the cause of Great Britain and her allies by a lofty tone of argument, if the tide of victory was to be turned by the dexterity of debate, and the efficacy of our exertions bore any proportion to the insolence of our boasting, we need not yet be afraid to claim a decided superiority.

We are not at all deficient on the score of confident assertion, or presumptuous menace. But it is by other means, by other criteria, and by other trials, that this question is to be decided. Weak and inconsiderable as I am in this House, I did my utmost previous to the commencement of this unfortunate contest, to persuade the Government to send an Ambassador to Paris, when undoubtedly he would not have met with the treatment which an Ambassador of Great Britain is now alledged to have experienced. But when they say that this Ambassador was dismissed in a way unexampled in the history of civilized nations, they surely must have forgot the manner in which M. Chauvelin was sent from this country. At a subsequent period, when the whole of Belgium was regained, when the French were not possessed of one foot of ground in that territory, did I then neglect my duty to the country ? No ! I then renewed my motion for peace. This was at the period before the powers combined against France had gained the fortrefs of Valenciennes ; but when it was certain that it must fall, I contended then was the period to make peace. And I now ask, if an attempt had been then made to negotiate, whether we might not have expected to obtain peace on terms equally honourable and advantageous, as any which we can now possibly claim ? Would we have obtained a peace less favourable to the general balance of power, or less likely to be permanent in its duration than any which can be concluded under the circumstances of the present moment ? Again, and again, have I pressed upon the House the necessity and policy of adopting measures for the restoration of peace, and again and

again have my motions for that purpose been rejected. In order to show how greatly Ministers miscalculated the nature of the contest, at that former period when I argued for peace, it was said, "What, make peace before you have achieved a single contest, and when you are just beginning to make advances in the country of the enemy!" Such, at that time, was the stile of reasoning brought forward in opposition to the arguments which I urged in favour of peace. So widely were Ministers then deceived with respect to the nature of the contest, so falsely did they calculate as to the turn of subsequent events. Unhappy calculation! Unhappy mistake! The object did not respect a particular branch of trade, or a limited extent of territory. The most important interests of the country were at stake. The Ministers, by their calculations, were not pledging Jamaica, or any island of the West Indies. They were pledging Great Britain itself, the fate of which may in some degree be considered as dependant on the issue of this night's debate. The right honourable gentleman formerly in talking of the nature of the contest, made use of a memorable expression, and which cannot easily be forgotten. He intimated that the nature of the contest was such, that our exertions ought to know no bounds, except so far as they were limited by our resources, and that our efforts must be extended to the utmost pitch, before we could either hope for an honourable termination of the struggle, or the secure and permanent enjoyment of peace. He expressly declared that we ought not to cease from the contest, till we should be able to say,

" Possit quæ plurima virtus

" Esse fuit. Tardè certatum est corpore regni."

The right honourable gentleman has stated the difficulties attendant upon the negotiation, as arising from two circumstances; first, the difficulty in all cases, of proposing overtures, without being able to ascertain what reception they are likely to experience; secondly, the particular obstacles from the relative situation of the two countries. The right honourable gentleman has, however, omitted to state a difficulty more weighty and insuperable than either of those I have now mentioned. In every negotiation the difficulty of coming to any definitive arrangement, must be infinitely increased in proportion to the degree of distrust entertained by the parties with respect to their mutual intentions. If the right honourable gentleman had some reason to suspect the sincerity of the French Directory, had not they at least equal grounds to entertain the same doubts with respect to his views in the negotiation? After every epithet of reproach had been exhausted by Ministers to vilify

their characters, was it to be expected that they would readily listen to terms of peace dictated by those Ministers, except they were brought into that state of necessity and submission, which precluded them from any alternative, and compelled them to an unconditional compliance with any pacific proposition that might be presented to their acceptance? When Lord Malmesbury, in addressing the French Minister, so often brings forward his profession of high consideration, I cannot but smile, when I recollect that Lord Auckland was made a Peer, (for I know of no other reason for his advancement to that dignity), merely because he declared that the men who are now addressed in such respectful terms "ought to be put under the sword of the law," and because he denounced them as miscreants and traitors to all Europe. His Lordship, by this declaration, brought forward in a public capacity, shewed that he, acting on the part of Great Britain, was not slow to be their executioner and their judge. There is one part of the address, which the right honourable gentleman has entirely omitted to notice, and to which I can by no means subscribe—that His Majesty has neglected no proper opportunity to conclude this war. [Here Mr. Fox desired the paragraph in the address to be read by the clerk]. A few years ago, when I earnestly pressed the propriety of the negotiation, the right honourable gentleman contended, that the French were not capable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity. He neither, however, at that time, nor at any subsequent period, showed any reason why they were not capable of maintaining those relations. I ask, in what respect they are now become more capable of maintaining those relations, than when I formerly proposed to treat? Will the right honourable gentleman say, that then there was only a provincial Government, and that there now exists a permanent Constitution? I am sure that he will not venture to press that argument, as he must be aware of the extent to which it will lead him. And if such be the case, I have no hesitation to state, that the assertion in the address, that no proper opportunity has been omitted to conclude peace, is entirely false, and as such, must meet my decided negative. At last, however, the right honourable gentleman declares, that he felt it his duty to attempt negotiation. I did not think it my duty to come forward to animadvert either on the motives of his conduct, or on the probable result of the measure, till the event had spoke for itself. The result has proved to be such as, however anxiously we might be disposed to deprecate it, was not difficult to foresee from the commencement of the negotiation; still more from the mode in which it has been conducted. If the country, indeed, consider the administration of the right honour-

able gentleman to be a blessing, they must take their choice between the continuance of that blessing and the restoration of peace. It is evident that those individuals who have conducted the war with such notorious incapacity, and entailed so many mischiefs on the country, must of all others be the most unfit to repair the errors of their own policy, and secure to Great Britain the enjoyment of permanent tranquillity. But not only have they evinced this glaring incapacity in the management of the present war, their conduct in former negotiations with respect to Spain and Russia has been such, as on the one hand to excite considerable distrust, and on the other to inspire a well-grounded hope of bringing them down from the most lofty pretensions to the most humiliating concessions. But what can be thought of their sincerity in the present instance, when they have repeatedly declared that any peace, under the particular circumstances, could only afford a breathing space from hostility, and ultimately must tend to redouble all the mischiefs to be dreaded from a continuance of the war? But even if Ministers had conducted the war with ability as distinguished, as their incapacity has been notorious, if they had displayed in debate as much temper and prudence, as they have discovered impolitic and indecent violence, if they had shewn themselves as much friends to the French, as on every occasion they have endeavoured to prove themselves the reverse; still I should have no hopes of peace on any permanent basis, except the present system of policy was entirely changed, and the principles upon which the war was undertaken totally disavowed. If the administration was to be transferred into the hands of persons, whose abilities I admire, and whose integrity I respect, as much as I condemn and reprobate the talents and character of those who are now placed at the helm of affairs, still I should consider this change of system and disavowal of principles, to be a necessary preliminary of peace. [A laugh from the Treasury Bench]. I see the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) smile at the idea of power being transferred into other hands. No expression of ridicule from that quarter can personally affect me; but it will be long before the country smile in consequence of any triumph which that right honourable gentleman may enjoy in this House. I again say, that it is necessary that the principles upon which the war was undertaken should be expressly disavowed. It is necessary for the solidity and permanence of any peace that may be concluded, that the maxims of sound sense, and of impartial equity, be recognized in the outset of the negotiation. The present has been a war of passion and of prejudice, and not of policy and of self-defence. The right honourable gentleman, whatever may have been his

sincerity in the transaction, is no stranger to the advantages that may be derived from the idea of a pending negotiation. That he now feels those advantages nobody will dispute. I know that some weeks ago a very confident report was circulated with respect to the probability of peace. It would be curious to know how far Lord Malmesbury at that period was influenced by any such belief. It does not appear from the papers on the table, that at the moment he could reasonably hope for a successful issue to his negotiation. It seems dubious indeed, from the inspection of those papers, whether Lord Malmesbury was not sent over merely to shew his diplomatic dexterity; to fence and parry with M. Delacroix, in order to evince his superior skill and adroitness in the management of argument, and the arts of political finesse; to confound the shallow capacity, and superficial reasoning of the French Minister, and to make the cause of this country appear to be the better cause. While Lord Malmesbury was employed thus honourably in the display of his talents at Paris, the Minister had an useful object of policy to answer at home. It was found convenient for the purpose of financial arrangements to hold out the hope of peace, till such time as it was found that the appearance of negotiation might be renounced without any unfavourable effect, as to the supplies of the year. But in order more completely to ascertain the sincerity which has been shewn by Ministers in the desire which they have expressed for peace, and the fairness of the means which they have employed for the attainment of that object, it may be necessary to enter a little more minutely into the history of the negotiation, and to follow the right honourable gentleman through the long detail which he brought forward on the subject, and which was sufficiently laboured to prove that he was aware of all the difficulties with which he had to contend in vindicating the character of the British Government, and of the necessity to put the most favourable gloss upon their conduct. The first step taken for the purpose of negotiation was, the communication at Basle, in which Mr. Wickham had been engaged as the agent of the British Government. As he was not authorized to take any definitive step, or to make any declaration binding on the Government, but little stress could be laid on the circumstance. Those, however, who attended to the details of that transaction, would not be disposed, even in that early stage of the business, to draw any inference very favourable to the sincerity of Ministers. The mission of Lord Malmesbury is unquestionably what Ministers wish to be considered as the grand effort for peace, and as affording an unequivocal proof of the sincerity of their wishes for its attainment. Of the details of that negotiation we are enabled to judge from

the papers which have been laid upon the table of this House. Till the publication of His Majesty's manifesto on the subject, I was only acquainted with the circumstances of that transaction from the statement of the public prints. I was not a little surprized when the manifesto reached me in the country, and from the perusal of its contents was induced to suspect that I must have been completely misled in my previous information. On the inspection, however, of the papers laid on your table, I was still more surprized when I found that the public prints were much more accurate in their representation of facts than His Majesty's declaration. Never, indeed, was there any paper brought forward with the stamp of official authority so little connected with the documents upon which it is professed to be founded ; so little warranted in the conclusions drawn from its premises. It entirely conceals the most important facts of the negotiation, and states the others so loosely as not to exhibit them in any precise and distinct shape. The right honourable gentleman has stated that a degree of disrespect was in the first instance shewn to a foreign Court by the French Directory, in their refusal to grant a passport for a British Ambassador, upon the application of the Minister from the Court of Denmark. But how does this fact stand ? The Court of Denmark did not at all interfere in the business. The Danish Minister, in the letter in which he applied for a passport, expressly stated, that he acted merely in a private capacity, and not in consequence of any instruction which he had received from his Court. So much then for the alleged disrespect shewn by the French to a foreign Court, and the inference which is then drawn of a disposition thus manifested to throw contempt on all established usages, and to dispense with the ordinary forms of accommodation, and the understood civilities of political intercourse. I understand, that as an apology for bringing forward the manifesto previous to the publication of the papers, much has been said of the mechanical labour of preparing those papers for the inspection of the House. I have formerly been in office, and I believe that those who are now engaged in the service of the department are fully as capable and diligent as the persons by whom I was then assisted. And I confidently declare that I see nothing in the mechanical labour of those papers that, if they had arrived on Saturday morning, ought to have prevented them from being in a state of readiness to be produced on Saturday evening. But I rather suspect, that with regard to the publication of the manifesto, it was thought expedient to attempt to give a bias to the sentiments of the House, before it was deemed advisable to submit the facts contained in the papers to their cool and sober investigation. As to

the delay which has been imputed on the score of mechanical labour, I am rather disposed to believe that it was purposely interposed, in order to afford to Ministers an opportunity of revising the papers, and of deciding what part of their contents it might be prudent to suppress, and what might be safely submitted to the public eye. It is curious to attend to the nature of the powers with which Lord Malmesbury was furnished, and to their connection with the object of his mission. He was sent in order to negotiate for peace, and furnished with full powers to conclude; but though he was thus authorized to conclude, he was allowed no latitude to treat. He had no instructions with respect to the terms he should propose, and no discretion upon which to act with respect to the propositions he might receive. When he was asked, if he came to treat for the King of Great Britain separately? he said, No: but that he came jointly to treat for the King of Great Britain and his allies. When he was asked, If he was furnished with any powers from those allies? he again replied—No. When he was asked, What terms he had to propose? he said he would send for instructions. Thus it appeared, that he was empowered to conclude for the King of Great Britain, but not qualified to treat; and that for the allies for whom he came to treat, he had no power to conclude. Could there possibly be a more ridiculous farce—a more palpable mockery of the forms of negotiation?

We next come to the basis; and this, indeed, carries us but a little way in the progress of negotiation. In this instance, the basis was laid so wide, as to comprehend no distinct object, and to be reducible to no precise meaning. It was that sort of general principle which no one could possibly dispute, but which could at the same time be attended with no practical benefit. The French accordingly stated, that they had agreed to your principle, and that they only disputed its application. The right honourable gentleman has asserted that a basis is always desirable; but, then it ought to be a basis which meant something, and not, as in the present instance, which meant nothing. The principle of mutual compensations is substantially recognized in every negotiation, and did not require to be specified.

The general objects of dispute in fixing a basis of negotiation have been, Whether it should be regulated by the *status quo ante bellum*, or the *uti possidetis*? The right honourable gentleman stated, as a proof of reluctance to negotiate on the part of the French, that they for some time hesitated to admit our proposed basis; but, in fact, they virtually recognized the principle when they entered into the discussion of terms. He who asks, What you will give? or

states what he is willing to receive, at once admits the basis of mutual compensation. But as a proof of the consistency of Ministers, a fortnight afterwards, when the French formally recognized the principle, and asked Lord Malmesbury, What terms he was prepared to propose? he was unprovided with any answer, and obliged to send to this country for instructions. What inference is to be drawn from this conduct on the part of Ministers? Is it not most probable, that by thus bringing forward a futile, illusory and unmeaning basis, they expected to disgust the French in the first instance, and at once to get rid of the negotiation; and if the French, who must have felt themselves mocked by this treatment, and who must have been more and more assured of the insincerity of our Ministers, had thought proper to stop all farther proceedings, would they not have been fully justified? By what motives were they bound to countenance a transaction which was conducted with no good faith, and could promise no satisfactory issue? Undoubtedly Ministers expected that the French would have resented the insult, and have broken off the negotiation in its outset. They thus hoped to obtain an easy credit for their pacific intentions, and to throw upon the enemy the odium of a determined purpose of hostility, and an unreasonable rejection of the preliminary basis of negotiation. Unfortunately, however, for this project, the basis was recognized. The disappointment of Ministers was evident. Lord Malmesbury was unprepared how to act, and obliged to send for farther instructions. The question with Ministers then became, "Since they have so ungraciously and unexpectedly accepted the basis which we intended to be rejected, What can we find that they must be indispensably called upon to refuse? What terms of insult and humiliation can we find that may rouse their dormant pride, and inevitably provoke rejection?" Lord Malmesbury, who before had no terms to propose, was now to be instructed to bring forward terms for the purpose of being rejected; and care was taken that they should be of such a nature as could not be expected to undergo much discussion, or readily to fail of their purpose.

I come now, Sir, to consider what was said by the right honourable gentleman with respect to the particular terms. In commencing this part of his speech, he thought some apology necessary for the sort of terms which had been proposed by Lord Malmesbury on the part of this country. He stated that 'it was always usual to be somewhat high in our demands in the first instance; that any propositions at the commencement of a negotiation were never considered as decisive, and that, in the progress of treating, we might relax from our original demands as circumstances should ren-

der expedient. But was the right honourable gentleman so unfit for the situation which he held, so ill qualified to judge of the conduct which was proper for those times, as seriously to maintain this argument? Did he not recollect, that, from what he had himself stated, negotiation itself might be considered as made upon a hostile principle? He had described it as a negotiation, the unsuccessful result of which must tend to divide France and to unite Great Britain, which must give indubitable confirmation to the justice of our cause and add double energy to our future efforts. In this situation, and with this particular view, what wise man would have looked to the last precedent of negotiation in order to regulate his conduct, and have conceived it necessary to proceed with all the tediousness of forms and dexterity of diplomatic artifice which might have been employed in any former instance! Instead of carrying your pretensions higher than you might be disposed to accept, you should have gone to the other extreme; you should have stated them at the lowest point of what you deemed to be fair and equitable, and, if any thing, rather been below the mark of what you might fairly claim, than exorbitant and unreasonable in your demands. You would thus have secured the end which the Minister professed to have in view—to render apparent to all Europe the equity and moderation of your own sentiments, and the injustice and ambition of the enemy. Had the French, from a suspicion of your sincerity, been inclined to break off the negotiation in the first stage, they might have said, “as no basis has been agreed upon, we see that the negotiation can come to no good, and therefore we will stop all farther proceedings.” But when they acceded to your basis, and invited you to propose particular terms, it then became you to be doubly careful, by the fairness and moderation with which you acted, to demonstrate the equity of your character, and vindicate your own sincerity in the eyes of Europe. I shall now advert to the two confidential memorials. I confess that I never was more strongly struck with the impossibility, even for talents the most splendid, and eloquence the most powerful, to cover the weakness of a cause, and supply the deficiency of real argument, than in the instance of what the right honourable gentleman said with respect to Holland. Even if Holland should be restored to its pristine situation, if the Stadtholder should be reinstated in the Government, and the alliance renewed with this country, he does not go the length of saying, that even then he would restore to Holland all her former possessions. No—he might then perhaps only be disposed to relax in their favour a considerable part of the conditions on which the present state of things obliges him to insist. A right

honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) sometime since made a very imprudent declaration in this House—that as we had taken the Cape of Good Hope, and Ceylon, we meant to keep them for ever. We feel ourselves, it seems, too nearly interested in those acquisitions to be disposed to relinquish them. This is reasoning very much *a la Francaise*. We say that it is better even for the Dutch themselves, that Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope should be in our hands than in theirs. The French may, with equal justice, alledge the same pretence for their refusal to part with Belgium. They may say that it is better for the interests of Belgium that it should remain in their hands, than that it should be restored to Austria. But if Holland be not, in every respect, reinstated in her former situation, then, says the right honourable gentleman, we have nothing to propose. It is curious to remark, in the very moment that he is at such pains to represent the demands of the French as in the highest degree exorbitant and unjust, how much he countenances those demands by the stile of his own pretensions. He says, “ We have taken a great deal from Holland, they have taken nothing from us, therefore we are not bound in justice and equity to make them any restitution ; but if Maestricht, or some place be ceded to the Emperor for the security of the Austrian Netherlands, we may perhaps be induced to make them some restitution, but on no account can we consent that Ceylon or the Cape of Good Hope shall be restored.” On the same grounds might the French say, “ We have taken a great deal from the Emperor, he has taken nothing from us, we therefore are not bound in justice and equity to make him any restitution : We demand that the *uti possidetis* be the basis of the negotiation.” What are the specific proposals which you make to the French ? You propose to them to give up all their conquests to the Emperor, and to evacuate Italy. The right honourable gentleman has said, that it is a strained geographical supposition, that by this demand with respect to Italy, it should be understood that they are also required to evacuate Savoy and Nice. I know not upon what geographical authority he proceeds; when he affirms that this would be a strained supposition ; I always thought that these places had been in no other country but Italy ; perhaps I may have been mistaken. Your propose to the French to evacuate Italy, to give up the Milanese, Belgium and Luxemburgh ; you demand of them to negotiate the arrangement of peace with Germany, with his Imperial Majesty as constitutional head of the empire. And though the French are already at peace with the most considerable Germanic powers, with the King of Prussia, with the Electors of

Saxony, Hanover, &c. you thus would place them in a situation in which they would have to begin all these treaties anew. You hint indeed, that in consequence of this arrangement, which supposes on their part so great a sacrifice, that it is not impossible that some cession may be made to them on the Germanic side of their frontiers. And in return for all the sacrifices you require from the French, you offer to restore to them Martinique, St. Lucia, Tobago; reserving, however, one of them as an equivalent, if they are to retain St. Domingo. The restoration of Belgium is stated as a *sine qua non*; it has been represented to be of the utmost importance, that it should not be suffered to remain in the hands of the French. I should indeed regret to see Belgium attached to the territories of the Republic; but if you are really sincere in your wishes for peace, if you consider Belgium as an object of so much value, do not offer brags for gold. Let us put the case, that Belgium were still in the hands of the Emperor, how would you treat the offer of two or three West India Islands, on the part of the French, in order that it might be given up to them? If you really wished France to give up Belgium, you should have offered to give up the Cape of Good Hope, which a determination has been so indiscreetly expressed to retain. I have no hesitation in saying, that it ought only to be considered as an instrument to procure the restoration of peace on favourable terms, and that if you could get a proper equivalent, that you ought not to keep it; what you now offer is trifling indeed, and if France should comply with your demands, what would be her relative situation with respect to the other powers of Europe? She would in that case have given up Belgium, Luxemburg and Italy, and farther it is required, that something should be ceded to the Emperor, in order, as is stated, to render him secure on the side of the Austrian Netherlands. The three great powers of Europe will all of them be left with considerable acquisitions. The king of Prussia has gained a third part of Poland. Russia has obtained a considerable extent of territory from that unfortunate country; and in addition to his share in the division, it is also proposed that the Emperor of Germany shall be put in possession of Maestricht, or of some other place: France is only to be left with Savoy, Nice and Avignon. Is the state of the war such as to justify this proposition? Is it fair and equitable that all the other powers should gain more than France? When Great Britain made a proposition so unreasonable, France naturally took a step calculated to give confidence to the people in those countries she had annexed to the Republic, by declaring that on no account could she consent to give them up. In the ingenious con-

ference which took place between the British Ambassador and the French Minister, Lord Malmesbury declared that the King of Great Britain would not recede from his demand with respect to the Netherlands. Must not the French, in consequence of this declaration, have been induced to assume an equally resolute tone with respect to their intention of keeping that territory, when from the nature of the terms proposed they perceived no likelihood that peace could be had? As to the French Minister having asked Lord Malmesbury to give in his ultimatum, it evidently meant no more than that he should make a formal declaration of what he had said with respect to Belgium, a demand which surely cannot be considered as unreasonable. After having heard to-day so much stated of the value of Belgium, and such importance to the demand that it should be restored to the Emperor, I cannot but recollect that it is not very long since, that the people of that country were in a state of rebellion, and that it was surmised at the time, that we were by no means averse to support them in their endeavours to shake off the Austrian yoke. But however great the value of Belgium may be, is it an object of such immense consequence as to justify the continuance of a long, a hazardous, and destructive war? Is it worth being contended for at the expence of such blood and treasure? And even if the objects be deemed so valuable as to justify all those sacrifices, there is another question to be considered. If in addition to that expence and carnage with which the war has already been attended, it be proper to sacrifice a hundred millions more, and a hundred thousand men for its attainment, it ought also to be shewn that it is attainable by those means. After what has appeared from the experience of the past, who will pretend to say that a continuance of war and all its calamities will tend ultimately to bring you nearer to your object? It ought beside to be recollected that the Emperor, who is your friend to-day, may be your enemy to-morrow. I remember that it is not eight months since the Emperor was not so much a favourite with Ministers; perhaps, indeed, they were cautious in expressing their partiality, lest it should be suspected that money was then going to the Court of Vienna. At that time the King of Sardinia was extolled as a pattern of fidelity to all Princes: the Emperor seemed to make no figure in the comparison. I do not mean to impute to the Sardinian Monarch any breach of faith; circumstances of necessity compelled him to conclude a treaty with the French Republic, and we have not heard in what situation he is now to be considered with respect to this country. Ministers have already sent large sums to his Imperial Majesty; we are about to make still farther advances, and it cannot be cal

culated that the alliance can be maintained at an expence to the country of less than a sum of two millions annually. I mean no reflection on the character of the Emperor ; but if we should not be able to grant him the same assistance, he may be reduced to the same necessity as the King of Sardinia, and compelled to conclude a peace. When all these circumstances are considered, the sacrifices which must necessarily be incurred in the attempt to wrest Belgium from the French, and the uncertainty of obtaining the object, the Minister, who on that ground only shall refuse to make peace, has undoubtedly much to answer for on the score both of policy and humanity. Here comes the question of the treaty concluded with the Emperor in 1793, by which we engaged not to lay down our arms without his consent. I greatly lamented the conclusion of any such treaty at the time, and then brought forward a motion that it was the duty of the House not to approve of any engagements that might tend to create obstacles in the way of peace. If we urge the stipulations of a treaty, as a reason why we cannot conclude peace but on certain terms, we directly sanction the sort of argument which is represented as so unjustifiable on the part of the French. I certainly am no friend to setting up the Constitution of France against the *Droit Publique* of Europe. But are the French in their arrangements to consider the engagements of our treaties, as of greater weight and consequence than we affect to consider theirs? The right honourable gentleman has put the case, that supposing the French Constitution decreed that the city of Westminster formed an integral part of the Republic, were we bound to respect such a determination? The case may be retorted, that if we by our treaty with the Emperor had stipulated to put him in possession of Paris, with what colour could so ridiculous a stipulation be urged as an obstacle to peace? We had no more right to talk of our treaties, than they of the regulations laid down with respect to their boundaries. If an absurd or impracticable condition is introduced into a treaty, is there not reason to suspect, that it has been foisted in merely for the purpose of throwing difficulties in the way of peace?

The right honourable gentleman has gone at great length into the subject of the French Constitution. He laid great stress on a remark of M. Delacroix, that it would be impossible to revoke the regulations of the Constitution with respect to the boundaries of the Republic without convening the primary assemblies. This, which he treated as an exaggeration of the proposition of the French Minister, that it was impossible to give up any part of the territory annexed to the Republic, I, on the contrary, consider in the light of an explanation, and as doing away all the offensive part of the prin-

ciple. For instance, if the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt applied to me, as a Minister of this country, to conclude with him a subsidiary treaty, if I thought the measure advisable, I would have signified my readiness to acquiesce in his application ; but at the same time I would have told him, that I must first consult the House of Commons, and that without their approbation the Constitution declared that it was impossible to dispose of any part of the public money. The same conduct I should have pursued towards the Emperor, in making advances to whom, Ministers, during the present session, have thought themselves entitled to dispense with the most valuable privilege of the House of Commons. And when in this instance I cited the Constitution of this Country, it could not be considered as a direct negative on the application, but only as throwing a difficulty in the way of the measure. We are not bound to respect the French Constitution ; but they, undoubtedly, in the course of negotiation, may fairly urge any ground of difficulty which its regulations present to a compliance with our demands. The right honourable gentleman has imputed to the French, all the odium and blame of breaking off the negotiation. He says that we are not bound by any thing as a *sine qua non*, for that, in the nature of a negotiation, is impossible until it is concluded. That is easily stated in the course of a debate. But whatever the right honourable gentleman may say upon that subject, the world at large, in judging dispassionately upon the subject, will regard the memorial of Lord Malmesbury as the *sine qua non* of the Court of Great Britain respecting Belgium. You say it may be recovered by force of arms. Good God ? what is the probability of that event ? What are we to do ? What can we do ? What security have we that we shall not sink in our prospects upon that event, and that they will not rise in proportion as we sink ? Remember the time when Belgium was in possession of the allies, and it was proposed that we should enter upon a negotiation for peace then, and at which time the French would have gladly attended to terms of peace of which they will not now hear. What, in the prosecution of this unhappy contest, are you to look for the farther you proceed, but terms still worse than those which you might obtain even now, if you gave proof of sincerity in the negotiation ? Consider what your disgrace will be if you fail to recover Belgium, which you have told the world is a *sine qua non*. Have you considered the difficulties that may attend it. Are you prepared for all the hazards that may attend it ? If you are, say so at once boldly, and act like men ; but do not amuse the people of this country by a delusive pretence, as you did by an amendment, which you adopted,

to get rid of the motion of an honourable friend of mine, and in which you stated to Europe that you would negotiate with France when its Government was capable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity with other powers. I know that these little tricks and artifices have had their ends. They have often, much too often, been employed to cover the dexterity of a debate; and in some situations they may almost appear harmless; but these little quibbling distinctions are not adapted to the important affairs of which we are now to consider. The Minister, in ordinary cases shall be welcome on my part to his little triumph in such little artifices: but these are not times to indulge him in them. He is not made for these times of great difficulty. When the fate of a question, comparatively indifferent, is before us, his talents are well adapted to obtain success, which, for my own part, I do not envy him; but when the fate of Empires depend upon our proceedings, we should not give way to his vanity. These are times that require openness and candour, and a determination to look at the posture of our affairs in a direct, a bold and undaunted manner. Prevarication, subterfuge and evasion, will not now do. It is time to speak out. The plain question now is, peace or war? However the right honourable gentleman may contrive to persuade the majority of this House, that his wishes and inclinations bend towards peace, I have no doubt, but the papers, those even in the ministerial interests, will hold forth to the public, that the vigorous prosecution of the war is the only measure which the country has left for its security. Members of this House, when they go into the country, will perhaps hold a different language, and tell their constituents and neighbours that they do not hold themselves pledged to a continuance of the war. But it will not be believed. The *sine qua non* with regard to Belgium, will overbalance the assertions of Members of Parliament. Parliament has not that credit which it once had—Parliament does not deserve to have credit for——

Mr. YORKE here interrupted Mr. Fox, by calling to order. He said, that when a gentleman asserted, in that House, "that Parliament had no credit with the country, and that it did not deserve credit," all respect for the House was done away: he therefore moved that Mr. Fox's words might be taken down.

Mr. FOX explained what he intended to say, when he was interrupted by the honourable gentleman, Mr. Yorke, who still contended that the words were as he had stated them.

The SPEAKER said, that the rule of the House was, that when any gentleman desired the words of another Member to be

taken down, it was necessary he should put them down in writing, in order that they might appear in the shape of a motion.

Mr. YORKE said, that if the House could tamely sit and hear such language used respecting it, as had then been used; language which would not have been brooked or suffered by their ancestors, he did not think it was worth his while to put down their proceedings in writing; the words, however, which he understood the right honourable gentleman to say, and which he moved again to have taken down, were, "that the Parliament had not credit with the Country, and did not deserve credit."

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that the honourable gentleman who spoke last, had moved for the words to be taken down; but for his part, when he reflected on the very extraordinary speech which that honourable gentleman had just delivered, he was at a loss to decide, whether he meant that his own words should be taken down, or those of his right honourable friend.

The SPEAKER stated to the House his opinion of the point. If one Member only moves for the words of any other Member to be taken down, it cannot be done. But if it should be the opinion of a majority of the House that the words ought to be taken down, then it became the duty of that Member, who first desired the words to be taken down, to state them himself, as he understood them, in writing, in order that they might be fairly submitted to the House in the form of a motion. The Member, who spoke the words, had a right to peruse them when thus put into writing, and to state what he apprehended he had actually said, if he differed with those put down. He had also a right to give his explanation to the House; and if there was a difference in the opinion of Members respecting the words spoken and those put down in writing, it then became a question for the House to determine. The right honourable Member who spoke the words, had given an explanation which was very different from those mentioned by the honourable Member who called him to order—that honourable gentleman had interrupted the right honourable Member who spoke the words before he had finished the sentence. In regard to the point of order, if it had appeared to him that the right honourable Member who spoke the words was out of order, he should certainly have taken notice of it.

Mr. Serjeant ADAIR was of opinion, that the words mentioned by the honourable gentleman, who moved to take them down, were the same, except the want of *one* word, which appeared to him to be of considerable import. The words were, "that the Parliament had not *that* credit in the country which it once had."

The leaving out which word, and the interruption of the right honourable gentleman before he finished his sentence, in his opinion, caused all the blame which the honourable gentleman, who moved to take down the words, had attached to them.

Mr. YORKE said, that from what had fallen from the learned Serjeant as to the omission of a word which he had not heard, he would not trouble the House any farther, as he saw that different opinions prevailed as to the words spoken.

Mr. W. SMITH said, that while the support, good order, and wholesome regulations of the House, were pretended to be the object, it was necessary that a gentleman should not be interrupted without a sufficient cause. He therefore hoped the honourable gentleman should be obliged to proceed with his motion, that the words might be taken down, and the opinion of the House had upon them. For his part, he had attended to what the honourable gentleman had said on the subject, and he thought his words had been infinitely more offensive and disrespectful to the House, than any which had been uttered by his right honourable friend. [Mr. Fox was here much called upon to proceed.]

Mr. FOX then proceeded to state, that at the moment in which he was interrupted, he was alluding to the circumstances of the time in which we live; and in the explanation he had before given, as well as that he was now about to give, he did not wish to shelter himself against any motion which the honourable gentleman had made, or might think proper hereafter to make, on the subject. I said, Sir, (continued Mr. Fox,) that this House has not the credit with the Public, nor does it deserve that credit, which former Houses of Commons had. I say this, Sir, on the most thorough conviction. I am sensible that in saying so, I do not speak with so much respect of this House as it is my wish to be able to do. I am sorry for it. I must, however, declare what I believe to be the truth. I have now re-stated my words, and the honourable gentleman may take them down if he pleases. There is, Sir, one particular circumstance attending the present business, which is a general prevailing idea, that the House cannot get off the decision of this day. It was now plainly the question of peace or war. The proposition of the negotiation was said to be for peace: the present address is evidently for war. It will not be got rid of by any ambiguous shuffling, by way of amendment, as some former motions in this House have been. An honourable friend of mine near me (Mr. Grey) some time ago moved a fact. The Minister thought proper to decline it, but he did not dare do it by a direct negative; he therefore got rid of it by an evasive manœuvre,

in the shape of a shuffling amendment. In consequence of the cavils of that day, one hundred millions sterling have been added to the national debt, and half a million of souls have been swept from the face of the earth. If the House shall be of opinion that Belgium is really entitled to be regarded as a *sine qua non*, that it is an object for which this country ought to continue at war, till it has expended another hundred millions, and shed the blood of half a million more wretched souls; if the House thinks so, it ought openly to declare its opinion. If, on the contrary, the House should think with me, that it is not worth the risk of this country expending such immense treasures of money and blood to obtain Belgium, in order to restore it to the Emperor, who may, perhaps, in a short time, be no longer our ally; then let them act like men, and by some fair and unequivocal amendment, convince the country, and shew the world, that they will not be longer subservient to such a dreadful waste of blood and treasure. I now come, Sir, to what is said with regard to the breaking off the negotiation, by making Belgium a *sine qua non*. If it be true that Lord Malmesbury had done this, I ask upon what ground it was done. Was the Emperor a party to the negotiation? Here, then, is a *sine qua non* made in a matter intended solely for the benefit of the Emperor, to which, nevertheless, he is not a party, and which we do not know whether he himself would absolutely insist on or not. Surely this might have been known before the negotiation was entered upon. When we were so often sending such immense sums to the Emperor, millions after millions, some person or other employed in those offices might have asked the question. Had any one done so?—No. I ask any impartial man, if this is not a mere mockery? But, says the right honourable gentleman with great emphasis, why did not the Directory present a *contre projet*? To whom should they present it? was the Emperor a party? No. They had, then, no one to present it to, for every thing contained in our *projet* was for the Emperor's benefit alone. I agree with the right honourable gentleman as to the principle, that a people, who come into the power of another people by the chance of war, cannot, by the law of nations, be disposed of, lawfully, till the definitive treaty of peace is concluded; but this is very different from a people who are left at liberty to chuse a government for themselves, and who, after such liberty, voluntarily adopt the step of uniting themselves with their neighbours, and those who, perhaps, at one time might have claimed over them the right of conquest. There is one thing very remarkable, that in all this negotiation, where almost every possession of all the parties is taken notice of, one place should never once have

been mentioned. The name of the valuable and important island of Corsica never appears in a single solitary instance. Did Ministers say when they took Corsica, you may form a government of your own, and be a free people? Did they offer to leave them to themselves? No; they sent a Viceroy. Sir Gilbert Elliot went as a Representative of His Majesty—cooked them up a Constitution, half French, half English, and endeavoured to detach them entirely from any predilections they might be impressed with in favour of French principles. The French were, and always had been, represented by Ministers, and those they employed, as a hoard of assassins. Suppose the Corsicans had said they chose the King of Great Britain as their King, and had desired, in the strongest terms, to be attached to the British empire as a part of it, and entreated that they might not be given up to this hoard of assassins; would you have said in a negotiation for peace, that Corsica was an object of restoration? I fancy not. May not the French, then, use the same argument with respect to Belgium? On former occasions, when I said the conquests in the West Indies would be a means of negotiation, the right honourable gentleman started at the idea. He then ridiculed the idea of *status quo ante bellum*; he particularly alluded to Martinico, which he said was not to be considered like a conquest in former wars. That this island was taken at the particular request of the inhabitants of it, who all desired to be taken into the protection and allegiance, and to become subjects of His Britannic Majesty. Martinico was, however, mentioned in this negotiation, and the right honourable gentleman had gone off from his high language. The right honourable gentleman had mentioned the breaking off the negotiation as “a matter of disappointment, but not of despondency or despair;” I certainly do not view it either in despondency or despair. I very well know that we are not yet at the end of our resources, but I am certain we are every day approaching nearer to it. If we had peace at this moment, I have very little doubt but, with œconomy in every department, a due regard to the finances and to the encouragement of the commerce and manufactures of the country, we might still retrieve from our present difficulties; but if the war is to continue any length of time, God only knows what may be the dreadful consequences. Certain, however, it is, that peace cannot be obtained by a perseverance in the present system. It must be changed. I am not one of those who wish to alter the Constitution: I wish only to reform it; to restore the voice of the people to that rank in it which it is entitled to hold; to make the opinion of the Minister, *nothing*; to see that of the People, *all*.

I am told, you wish for a removal of the present Ministers. I do. The Country cannot be saved without it. The People must chuse. If there are those who love the Constitution to which they were born, and not the defacings of it by Ministers, it is time for them to stand forward, to shew themselves, and by constitutional means, renovate the Constitution, which alone can save themselves and their posterity from inevitable ruin.

It has been said, that the breaking off the negotiation was all owing to the unreasonableness of the enemy. I do not think so. They have taken advantage of the situation in which their great success has placed them. If they should be able to continue their successes; if they should in consequence rise in their demands; there must be great alteration in the conduct of Ministers, or our situation will be deplorable indeed. I cannot here help reflecting on the period of the American war. Able men used then to say, "It is not our fault; we are not to blame; 'tis all owing to the unreasonableness of the enemy that we do not obtain peace." Infatuated and self-abused men! They were afterwards, fatally for the interests of this country, convinced of the folly of their arguments, and obliged to accept of terms far more against them, than they might have obtained, had negotiations been offered long before they were. But, good God, Sir! what were the calamities then, compared to those we have now to struggle with? What the prospect of extricating ourselves then, compared with the present? The contemplation of the difference is shocking to think of. To America we had little to give but her independence, and the trouble of conciliating her lost affection; to France, Spain, &c. mutual restitutions. In the present case, we have no prospect but the continuance of the war; and the consequences of that are too dreadful to anticipate, farther than I have already done. There is one other part of the right honourable gentleman's political conduct, which strikes upon my mind at this moment, and which I cannot forbear to mention; I mean his entrance into Parliament. This was towards the close of the American war. He began his Parliamentary career by opposing it most vehemently, and soon after the majority which had carried on the war was put an end to, the right honourable gentleman complimented the Rockingham Administration, and said, you have destroyed the majority which carried on the American war; but you cannot be sure of having gained your end; if you do not strike at the root of the evil. There must be a radical reform, otherwise Ministers may, on future occasions, arise, who will again plunge the country into more bloody and expensive wars than even that we have got rid of. The forebodings and

predictions of the right honourable gentleman had been now fatally accomplished. He himself had lived to become that very Minister, whose anticipated misconduct he had so feelingly deplored, and no sooner became possessed of ministerial influence, than he used it more liberally than his predecessors had ever done, not only to prevent reform, but to stab the Constitution in every vein, and to plunge us into armaments and wars far more prodigal and lavish both in blood and treasure, than had ever been known before in the annals of our history. I shall not trouble the House, Sir, any farther at present. I have already taken up too much of their time; before I sit down, however, I will intreat the House to give the subject the most mature examination. If they are not for the continuance of the war, I hope they will, like men, withdraw their confidence from that quarter, where it has been, in my opinion, so long misplaced, and vote for the amendment which I shall have the honour to submit to the House. Mr. Fox then moved as an amendment, that, after the words "returning His Majesty thanks for his gracious message," there be inserted the following:

"That this House has learnt with inexpressible concern, that the negotiation His Majesty lately commenced for the restoration of peace has been unhappily frustrated.

"In so awful and momentous a crisis, the House of Commons feel it their duty to speak to His Majesty with that freedom and earnestness which becomes men anxious to preserve the honour of His Majesty's Crown and to secure the interests of his people. That, in doing this, they sincerely deplore that they are under the necessity of declaring, that, as well from the manner in which the late negotiation has been conducted, as from the substance of the memorial which appears to have produced the abrupt termination of it, they have reason to think His Majesty's Ministers were not sincere in their endeavour to procure the blessings of peace so necessary for this distressed country, and that all prospect of pacification seems entirely removed from their view. For on the one hand His Majesty's Ministers insist upon the restoration of the Netherlands to the Emperor as a *sine qua non* from which they have pledged His Majesty not to recede; while, on the other, the Executive Directory of the French Republic, with equal pertinacity, claim the preservation of that part of their conquest as a condition from which they cannot depart.

"That, under these circumstances, this House cannot help lamenting the rashness and injustice of His Majesty's Ministers, whose long-continued misconduct has produced this embarrassing situation, by advising His Majesty, before the blessings of peace had been un-

fortunately interrupted, to refuse all negotiation for the adjustment of the then subsisting differences, although at that time the Netherlands, now the main obstacle to the return of tranquillity, so far from being considered as an object of contest, was solemnly renounced, and the peace of Europe offered into His Majesty's hands upon the basis of that renunciation, and upon the security and independence of Holland, whilst she preserved her neutrality towards France.

“ That this House hath farther deeply to regret, that soon after the commencement of the war, when by the vigour of His Majesty's arms, with the assistance of his allies, the Republic of Holland had been rescued from invasion, and the greatest part of the Netherlands had been recovered by the Emperor ; at a time too when most of the Princes of Europe with resources yet unexhausted, continued firm in their alliances with Great Britain, His Majesty's Ministers did not avail themselves of this high and commanding position for the negotiation of an honourable peace, and the establishment of the political balance of Europe ; that, on the contrary, without any example in the principles and practice of this or any other nation, it is with pain this House recollects His Majesty's Minister refused to set on foot any negotiation whatsoever with the French Republic ; not upon a real or even alledged unwillingness on his part to listen to the propositions now rejected by her, or to any other specific proposal of indemnity or political security, but upon the arrogant and insulting pretence that her Government was not capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity amongst nations, and that on this unfounded and merely speculative assumption His Majesty was advised to continue the war to a period when the difficulties in the way of peace have been so much increased by the defect of most of the powers engaged in the confederacy, and by the conquests and consequent pretensions of the French Republic.

“ That this House having thus humbly submitted to His Majesty the reflections which His Majesty's gracious communication immediately suggest, feel themselves in duty bound, for the information of His Majesty, and the satisfaction of an exhausted people, to proceed with unremitting diligence to investigate the causes which have produced our present calamities, and to offer such advice as the critical and alarming circumstance of the nation may require.”

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, that the speech of the right honourable gentleman who had just sat down, was one of the most violent and mischievous that he ever heard come from an envenomed Opposition. There was scarce one topic contained in it

that was not calculated to give countenance and encouragement to our enemies ; to supply their defects, and to shew them the several points of which they might avail themselves, to the prejudice of this country. In the good times of our forefathers, who were certainly wiser and better than us, it never occurred to the most enflamed Patriot to get up and avail himself of his situation as a Member of that House, to plead the cause of the enemy, in the manner the French Republic was encouraged and applauded that night. He did not mean to follow the right honourable gentleman through the whole of those topics which he had dwelt on that night, and which he had lugged into every speech he made in that House these ten years past. With respect to the change of system proposed by him at home, he must make an observation or two. It was certainly awkward for him, in his situation of one of the King's Ministers, to say any thing on the subject ; but that awkwardness was, in a great degree, removed by the manner of the right honourable gentleman, who intimated, that no public man in England, for twelve years past, was capable of governing the country but himself. The right honourable gentleman had not the good fortune, however, to find the country concur in opinion with him. It was, indeed, rather extraordinary, that with Ministers so very unpopular as he would have the present to be, and while he was day after day advertising himself for a place, he could not persuade the country to join him in his opinion. The point he meant to state was exactly this, that whenever the right honourable gentleman spoke in the name and under the sanction of the public, he gave no manifestation of having received authority from the public to do so, nor to declare in their name that they had passed a verdict on the Ministers of the Crown. The right honourable gentleman's present amendment was a very fair one ; he called upon the House to make a declaration that they believed the Ministers to have been insincere. For his own part, he was ready to make his appeal to the House ; upon that issue he would call upon the Members, as honest men, to lay their hands on their hearts and give their opinion, whether they thought Ministers had omitted any measures that might procure peace for the country? All the conquests made from the enemy by us were offered up as an equivalent for the restitution of those made from our ally. He agreed that the expences of this war were very great ; but our success was equal to it ; and there was not a foreign possession belonging to the enemy that we had not taken, except one island ; and all these were offered to be surrendered as a compensation for what was to be restored to our allies. The Emperor's and our situation were thrown into one common stock. We professed ourselves willing to relin-

quith the acquisitions we had made, in order to procure him the restitution of the territories he had lost. With respect to Holland, and the charge of indiscretion made against him for his declaration concerning the Cape of Good Hope, he would observe, that that declaration had not been made lightly or without due deliberation ; and he was convinced that when he urged the retaining of that possession for ever, he was consulting the dearest interests of the country, without injuring those of any other power. And if this possession and Ceylon should be wrested from our hands, he should regret it as the greatest calamity. But it never was his intention to take from Holland its trade to the Cape, from the actual possession of which she could now derive no benefit ; for the Dutch East-India Company was always too weak to keep it at that great expence which was necessary. It was on that ground distinctly that he had stated the intention of Government never to give up the Cape of Good Hope. With respect to the Austrian Netherlands, they had engaged the attention of this country for near three hundred years. The importance of the subject was recorded on the journals of that House. He would appeal to the old French Monarchy for the truth of the assertion, that one acre of land in the Austrian Netherlands was worth a whole province in France. He wished thus to impress on the House the importance of the country in question, in order that gentlemen might weigh the subject before they adopt the propositions of the right honourable gentleman ; and that they might see how necessary it was for His Majesty to demand as a condition, that they should be evacuated by France. He wished to ask the right honourable gentleman, what other conclusion was France to draw from his proposition, but that of their having a greater right to retain the Netherlands with obstinancy ? Perhaps, his mind, glowing with universal patriotism and benevolence, thought it necessary to convey to our enemies every kind of information which might serve their purposes. The chance of recovering the Netherlands was not very remote, if we consider the late successes of the Emperor, and the probability of his still gaining more. He therefore did not think the prospect ought to be abandoned. The real question before the House was the manner in which the negotiation was broke off. He had flattered himself that every gentleman in the House would have formed such an opinion on this subject as to be unanimous in assisting the Executive Government to resist the insolent demands of our enemy ; and that no gentleman would have supported or encouraged them. There was nothing in the constitutional code of France that could justify them in their extravagant propositions. They desired us to give up every thing as a preliminary ; so that when we

should begin to treat, we were to have nothing to treat with. He controverted the statement of Mr Fox, respecting the application made through the medium of the Danish Ambassador, for a passport to a Minister, properly accredited, to commence a negotiation on the part of this country. The answer given to that application was—"Send your couriers to the frontiers of the Republic, and when they arrive there, let them apply in the regular way for passports to come to Paris." Did any gentleman in that House suppose such an answer an indication, that the French Directory meant to treat with this country on friendly terms?

His Majesty's Ministers still wishing to carry their most earnest wish for the negotiation of peace into effect, as soon as the necessary preliminaries were adjusted, sent Lord Malmesbury to Paris, who, as soon as the forms of his reception would admit, delivered a memorial, or rather two memorials, stating the terms that his Lordship was empowered to offer—One for Great Britain as an individual power, the other for Great Britain in concert with her allies. After being received, they were objected to for want of signatures, although they were accompanied by, and inclosed in, a signed note from the Minister Plenipotentiary: and here it may not be improper to observe, that his Lordship did not receive a line from the Executive Directory, or their Minister of Exterior Relations, Monsieur Delacroix, respecting either the basis of the negotiation, or the particular points to be conceded to, or receded from, by either of the contracting parties.

So much on the point of sincerity. Facts would best show which party had been wanting in a real desire to promote peace. He would ask, did the French, in any period of the business, come forward to negotiate, and were refused by us? No—the contrary is the truth. We have regularly used every means, from the note of Mr. Wickham at Basle, to the late mission of Lord Malmesbury, to bring about so desirable an event, but without success. There is a pertinacity about the French Government that precludes, except in appearance only, all overtures for a peace, which it is conceived they do not at this time wish for, by the obstacles they put in the way of its completion.

He then requested that gentlemen would not suffer their opinions to be led astray from the real question, by the sophistry of Mr. Fox, a sophistry which he was sorry to say did not only tend to lead from the question, but in its eventual application tended to strengthen the hands of our enemies, by giving delusive statements of our real situation. He concluded with solemnly calling upon the House, if they conceived the Administration had acted with that duplicity and in-

sincerity with which they were charged, to pass a vote of censure upon them, and inflict a heavy punishment ; but let it be unmixed with any other matter.

Mr. GREY replied to several of the points mentioned by Mr. Dundas. He said he would leave the House to judge how far his right honourable friend had been advertising for a place ; he who had, during the performance of his duty for many years, enjoyed less of royal favour than any other gentleman ; and against whom the same allusions had been made while he opposed the American war. He paid Mr. Fox some very high compliments as to his disinterestedness in his political character, and hoped he should one day see him possessing that situation, which the present holder of it had manifested his inability to maintain. It is probable the people of England will one day declare, whether gentlemen who regularly support every Administration, support the prosecution of the war, and the accumulation of the taxes, if those men are their best friends, or those who oppose those measures, though unfortunately in a minority. For his own part, he begged to put in for a share of the censure passed on his right honourable friend ; and whatever the momentary triumph of that night might be, gentlemen would, at some period, perceive that they had been not the enemies, but the supporters of the true interests of their country. He insisted that the fundamental evil from which all our misfortunes flowed, was, that peace never had been the real object of those who carried on the war. They went upon a system of extermination, and by this means our enemies were so irritated, there was danger of the war being never brought to an amicable conclusion.

Mr. Grey remarked, that the right honourable Secretary (Mr. Dundas) had made an erroneous statement, when he informed the House that the British had conquered every island belonging to the French except one. He had no doubt forgotten the Isle of Bourbon, Cayenne, and several other islands of consequence, which are still in their possession.

He proceeded to take a review of Lord Malmesbury's letter to Lord Grenville. He contended M. Delacroix' proposition to his Lordship, of offering an equivalent to the Emperor for the Austrian Netherlands in the secularization of the three Ecclesiastical Electorates, and several Bishoprics in Germany and Italy, might be considered as a kind of *contre projet*, and ought to have been attended to ; however much we might wish that the Netherlands should remain in possession of the Emperor, he feared that the most sanguine expectations of Ministers could hardly lead them to hope they could be regained by force. He considered the proposition of retaining the

most important possessions of our former ally, Holland, even though that country might be restored to its antient Constitution, as a most profligate trait in the late negotiation. The offer of restoring Martinico and Pondicherry only, (for St. Lucia and Tobago were to be kept as an equivalent for our supposed claims on St. Domingo) for all the conquests made by France on the Emperor, was a most absurd and extravagant proposition. He called upon the House to reflect on the calamitous situation of the country, the burden of taxes which must be imposed on the people, the torrents of blood that would flow, and the millions of lives that must be still lost if the war was suffered to be prosecuted.

At length the House divided,

For Mr. Fox's Amendment, 37—Against it, 212.

When the House was resumed,

Mr. GREY, after explaining the critical situation of the country in consequence of the approaching unexpected campaign, moved, that the House be called over on the 10th of January.

Mr. FOX supported this motion, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer opposed it, expressing at the same time his design of moving to-morrow that the House should be adjourned to the 14th of February.

The House divided,

For Mr. Grey's motion, 31—Against it, 164.

The House, at half past two o'clock, adjourned.

List of the Minority on the Amendment of Mr. Fox, to the Address for the continuance of this war.

Baker, J.
Bampfylde, Sir C.
Barclay, G.
Biddulph, R.
Bouverie, Hon. E.
Brogden, G.
Burch, J. R.
Burdett, F.
Byng, G.
Combe, Alderman
Courtenay, J.
Erskine, Hon. T.
Fox, C. J.
Grey, C.
Hare, J.
Hussey, W.
Jefferys, N.
Nicholls, J.
North, D.

Peirse, H.
Plumer, W.
Richardson, J.
Rusell, Lord W.
Scadamore, J.
Sheridan, R. B.
Shum, G.
Smith, W.
Spencer, Lord R.
Stanley, Lord
Taylor, M. A.
Thompson, T.
Tierney, G.
Tufton, Hon. H.
Tufton, Hon. J.
Whitbread, S.
Walwayn, J.
Western, C. C.

TELLERS—J. Jekyll, and General Tarleton.

Saturday, 31st December.

Dr. LAWRENCE observed to the House, that the circumstance which had attended the debate of the preceding night had made a very considerable impression on his mind, and the more he considered the subject, the more was he impressed with its importance to the country. What he particularly alluded to, was the demand insisted upon by the power with whom we were involved in war, that a proposition for peace on the part of this country should be founded on a basis consonant to the principles prescribed by their own Constitution. This he conceived a question of such magnitude, that he wished to draw the attention of the House to a full investigation of it. There were also other points necessary to be more accurately understood. It was particularly requisite to reconcile diversity of opinions respecting the exclusive power of Ministers to adopt such terms of negotiation with an enemy, as they thought proper; for himself, he conceived such a power was properly placed in their hands, subject to the controul of the House. However, it was his intention the first vacant day after the recess, to bring forward a motion, the object of which would be to state the situation of the country in the former part of the war, and the situation of the country now, together with the subject of the basis that had been proposed to France in the late negotiation.

Lord STOPFORD informed the House, that His Majesty had been waited upon with the address, in answer to his most gracious message, at which he had been pleased to express his particular satisfaction, and to declare it gave him the most sensible pleasure to receive such an assurance of the support of the House of Commons, on an occasion so important to the welfare and prosperity of the country. His Majesty was also pleased to declare, that a copy of the treaty with the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt should be laid before the House.

The House resolved itself into a Committee upon the bill for the better relief and maintenance of the poor.

Mr. JEKYLL expressed a wish, as the subject was of so much consequence, that a greater number of copies of the bill might be printed than usual, for the purpose of distributing throughout the Kingdom.

The SPEAKER said, he had already determined to have a number of copies printed, greatly exceeding what had, on any former occasion, been deemed requisite. He had ordered 1500, and that the press should stand open, in order that more might be printed if necessary, without incurring much additional expence.

Mr. Chancellor PITT observed, that it was his intention, after the bill had been committed, and the blanks filled up, to have it recommitted after the recess, in order that it might undergo as accurate a discussion, and be as fully understood, and rendered as perfect as possible.

The bill was committed, reported, and ordered to be printed.

The several orders were deferred till after the recess, and the House then adjourned until the 14th day of February next.

Tuesday, 14th February.

A petition was presented from the West-India planters and merchants, praying that the bill now pending in Parliament, for the construction of wet docks, may pass into a law. The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

A petition to the same effect was presented from the East-India Company, which was also ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Newland, from the Bank of England, presented at the bar an account of the Bills of Exchange accepted by the Treasury, and paid by the Bank, from the first of January 1795, to the 31st of December, 1796; also, an account of the sums issued by the Bank, by order of the Commissioners appointed for the Liquidation of the National Debt, during the same period, which were brought up, and ordered to lie upon the table.

The Sheriffs of London presented a petition, at the bar from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Council of the city of London, in Common Council assembled, praying for the extension of the jurisdiction of Courts of Conscience, and that leave might be given to bring in a bill for that purpose. The petition was brought up, read, and ordered to lie upon the table.

Mr. Alderman Anderson moved for leave to bring in the bill. Leave given.

The Sheriffs of London presented another petition from the Common Council of London, in favour of the Construction of wet docks, but praying that the House would allow them to bring in a bill for that purpose, as they were the chartered guardians of the trade of the river Thames. The petition being read,

Mr. Alderman ANDERSON moved that it be referred to a Committee of the whole House.

Mr. MANNING expressed his satisfaction that the Corporation of the city of London had at last come the length of acknowledging the necessity of making wet docks for the accommodation of the trade upon the river Thames, and that they were going to pursue

a different line of conduct from that which they adopted last year, when they opposed the second reading of the bill. The bill which the merchants had brought in, he expected to pass through that stage to-morrow, and he hoped that this petition was not meant to obstruct its progress.

The SPEAKER informed the honourable Member that this petition did not at all interfere with the second reading of the bill; that some petitions had already been presented for the hearing of council against it in this stage, which would be a question for the House to decide upon to-morrow.

Mr. Alderman CURTIS said, he did not mean to oppose the second reading of the bill to-morrow, nor had the city of London given any such instruction to its representatives; all he wished was, that they might be allowed to bring in another bill, and that the House should decide upon their respective interests.

Mr. Alderman ANDERSON hoped that the second reading of the bill would be put off to some distant day, that the House might be enabled to judge whether the plan of the merchants, or that which the city of London would propose, was preferable.

Mr. MANNING opposed the suggestion of Alderman Anderson for postponing the second reading of the bill.

The petition was referred to a select Committee, who are ordered to report thereupon to the House.

Wednesday, 15th February.

Sir W. PULTENEY presented a petition from the Mayor, Aldermen, &c. of the town of Shrewsbury, stating, that in the year 1784 a house of industry had been there instituted at a considerable expence, and which had been attended with very beneficial consequences; that in its present shape, the poor bill which had been brought into Parliament would destroy the effects of the institution; they therefore prayed that a clause might be inserted in the bill, to exempt their institution from its operation. Referred to a Committee on the poor bill.

The order of the day for the second reading of the wet-dock bill being read,

Mr. MANNING stated, that a considerable difference existed between this bill and that introduced last year, which he conceived would remove, in a good measure, the objections which had been urged against it. As the subject had already undergone so much discussion, he would not enter into any details concerning the bill, but should content himself with moving that it be now read a second time.

Mr. Alderman CURTIS said, that though several amendments had been made in the bill since it was last before the House, it still retained several objectionable parts: these, however, were not of such a nature as to make it necessary to oppose it upon principle; he would, therefore, not object to the second reading. In the mean time, he wished the House to understand, that when the bill was committed, he would object specifically to the several parts he conceived to be exceptionable. The City certainly agreed that there was a necessity for making docks, but would object particularly to the erecting of warehouses.

M^r. Alderman ANDERSON said, that he had hoped that the House would, upon a full consideration, have made choice either of the plan produced by the merchants, or that offered by the city of London, and in their judgment he should have acquiesced. He did not mean to oppose the second reading of the bill, but he would insist that counsel should be heard against those parts which were considered as exceptionable by the city of London.

Sir W. YOUNG expressed his pleasure, that the subject was discussed with so much more temper than it had been last session. He would not pretend to say which plan was best, being satisfied to see that they united in the principle, that something was necessary to be done.

Sir FRANCIS BARING said a few words.

The bill was then read a second time, and referred to a Committee.

Thursday, 16th February.

This being the day for a ballot for a Committee on the Downton election petition, and only ninety Members being present, an adjournment took place.

Friday, 17th February.

The House proceeded to a ballot for a Committee to try the merits of the Downton election petition, and the following gentlemen were chosen:

Thomas Tyrwhit, Esq.

Bryan Edwards, Esq.

John Angerstein, Esq.

Charles Smith, Esq.

Francis Gregor, Esq.

Robert Sewell, Esq.

Thomas Honyman, Esq.

Isaac Gascoyne, Esq.

Gabriel Stewart, Esq.

G. Augustus Pollen, Esq.

Sir Robert Ainslie,

James Strange, Esq.

William Currie, Esq.

Nicholas Vanfittart, Esq.

Charles Abbott, Esq.

Mr. MAINWARING presented a petition against the bill for the relief of the poor, from the parishes of St. Margaret, St. Clement, St. George Hanover-square, St. Paul Covent-garden, &c. stating that it would, if passed into a law, prove injurious to the rights and property of the inhabitants.

Mr. ROSE moved, that the Report of the Committee on the poor bill be taken into consideration on Monday se'nnight.

Mr. WHITBREAD expressed a desire to be informed, whether the merits of the bill were to be discussed before it could be fully and impartially considered; and whether the documents which were necessary for the information of gentlemen, were ready to be laid before the House.

Mr. ROSE begged leave to assure the honourable gentleman, that every possible step had been taken to accelerate the business, and that the schedules were preparing with the utmost dispatch.

Mr. WHITBREAD observed, that he feared it would be found impossible, from the delay which had taken place, to go through the bill this session.

Mr. ROSE assured the honourable gentleman, that no exertions had been omitted to bring forward a subject which his right honourable friend (Mr. Pitt) had considered of the utmost importance, and on which he had bestowed the most unremitting attention. In mentioning Monday for the consideration of the report, he did not positively say, that every thing would be in readiness for that time, though he entertained a confident hope of it.

After some additional observations from Mr. WHITBREAD, and a declaration from Mr. MAINWARING, that he trusted considerable notice would be given before the ultimate decision of the bill,

Mr. ROSE replied, that such was certainly the intention of his right honourable friend. Gentlemen could not but admit, that there were many difficulties in objects so various and complicated as the bill embraced; yet he could assert with confidence, that if it were not brought forward this session, it could not be attributed to any thing but necessity.

The report was ordered to be taken into consideration on Monday se'nnight.

Mr. WHITBREAD gave notice, that he should, on Friday next, move for an inquiry into the conduct of Administration with respect to the measures pursued for defeating the expedition planned by the French Republic against Ireland.

Here the SPEAKER informing Mr. Whitbread that Mr. Fox's

motion for the repeal of the treason and sedition bills stood for that day; Mr. Fox declared that he should defer his motion until Friday se'nnight. Agreed to.

The order of the day for the House to resolve itself into a Committee on the Quakers' bill, being read,

Sir W. SCOTT moved, that the order do stand over till Thursday next.

Mr. Serjeant ADAIR observed, that in one point of view he coincided with his honourable friend in deferring the going into the Committee. He was concerned to find that the thin state of the House was in itself a sufficient argument for that measure; yet he could not help expressing his sincere regret, that a bill of so much real importance, and which, notwithstanding his continued exertion, had been so often protracted, was not at that moment able to secure the attendance of gentlemen. He therefore would not oppose the motion, but he should not consent to postpone the progress of the bill any longer after that time, without taking the sense of the House on it.

Mr. WIGLEY trusted gentlemen would recollect that many persons were now in confinement, whom the bill was meant to relieve.

The MASTER of the ROLLS suggested, that the ballot to-day had, perhaps, been the cause of the present thin attendance. Another ballot was fixed for Tuesday. The same effect might be produced; would not Wednesday, therefore, be a better day?

Mr. Serjeant ADAIR expressed his obligation to the Master of the Rolls for his suggestion, and wished that Wednesday might be fixed, instead of Tuesday.

Mr. H. BROWNE thought that it ought not to go into the world that many persons were suffering imprisonment.

Mr. WIGLEY stated, that there were six persons now in York jail who had been confined for more than a year. (Mr. Wigley mentioned their names.) It had even been wished last year that the bill should pass with any imperfections that it might possess, in order that these unfortunate persons might be liberated.

The Committee on the bill was fixed for Wednesday next.

Monday, 20th February.

Mr. GEORGE, Chairman of the Committee for trying the merits of the Downton election, made his report from the said Committee.

That the fitting Members were duly elected.

That the petition against the said return was not frivolous nor vexatious:

That the opposition of the sitting Members to the said petition was not frivolous nor vexatious.

Mr. CANNING brought up the subsidiary treaty between His Majesty and the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt, which was ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. H. THORNTON rose, to offer a petition from his constituents to the House, on the subject of the decision of the Committee appointed to try the merits of the last Southwark election. He said, that the petitioners complained of their being laid under a considerable hardship by that decision; that they did not, however, complain of the hardship of that part of it by which Mr. Thelluffon was declared ineligible, much less did they complain of the decision of the former Committee, who had only determined in the manner in which (as Mr. Thornton thought) they were bound to do by the Treating Act, by making the election void. What his constituents complained of was, that part of the decision of the last Committee which affected their rights, by not merely unseating Mr. Thelluffon, but by seating Mr. Tierney, on the principle that all those votes were thrown away which had been given for Mr. Thelluffon on this second election. Mr. Thornton stated, that the petitioners conceived they ought to have had an opportunity of knowing the ineligibility of Mr. Thelluffon, before they were construed to have thus thrown away their votes, by voting for him. They stated in the petition, that on Mr. Thelluffon's offering himself a second time, they had taken all the means in their power to inform themselves whether he was eligible or not; that on consulting the Treating Act, they saw nothing that in their minds could imply ineligibility; and that all the lawyers who were consulted, considered him as eligible. That moreover, the Bailiff of the borough, who was the returning officer, had assured the electors that he had taken Counsel's opinion, and that they might safely vote for Mr. Thelluffon. Mr. Thornton stated, that under these circumstances the petitioners thought it was a considerable hardship that they should be condemned to be represented by a person who had not been chosen by a majority of the electors of Southwark, but who had merely the votes of a majority. Mr. Thornton, however, remarked, that in his opinion no question whatever could be raised as to the conclusiveness of every part of the decision of the late Committee, and that he believed the petitioners had little or no difference of opinion from him in this respect. They prayed, indeed, that the House would take into its consideration, whether any part of that decision could be brought under its delibe-

rations ; but if not, that they would take such measures as to the House might seem fit for maintaining the rights of electors in future cases. Mr. Thornton said, there were two measures of a Legislative kind which ought to be taken by the House, with a view to remedy any like hardships in future ; and first, he stated the law to be deficient at present in not allowing election petitions to be presented by electors who were on the same side with the sitting Member. The law entrusted to the sitting Member alone the interests of the electors on the same side with him, even in cases where those electors had an interest distinct from the sitting Member ; that in the present case, for instance, after the Committee had decided that Mr. Thellusson was not duly elected, there remained a farther question to be tried, namely, whether Mr. Tierney should be seated, or whether there should be a new election ? The other measure which he thought it might become the House to take, was that of explaining and amending the Treating Act, or passing a declaratory law, in order to ascertain what was to be the future construction of it. As the matter now stood, there was decision against decision. In the Norwich case before mentioned, the Treating Act did not inflict ineligibility, and the sitting Member remained seated. In the present case the Committee had resolved the direct contrary. In this respect he conceived therefore that the House could have no objection (in conformity indeed with what had been proposed already by an honourable gentleman (Mr. Whitbread) who had served on one of the Southwark Committees), to let a bill be introduced to clear up the point either one way or the other ; and he saw no particular objection himself to let ineligibility follow every conviction of having treated, if that seemed the disposition of the House. Mr. Thornton next adverted to the present partial and defective operations of the Treating Act, and it seemed to operate as a hardship in particular cases, in consequence of its being evaded in so many others. Many of his constituents, for instance, thought it hard that what they had seen done so often in the cities of London and Westminster, in the town of Guildford, and in a variety of other places, without any penal consequences following from it, should in their case have deprived them of the representative chosen by the majority, and should have fixed on them a person having only a minority of votes. One ordinary, and often very effectual means of evading the law, was the delaying to pay the bills for treating till after the fourteen days expired, within which the House required every petition to be presented. In the Southwark case it had been stated to him, that Mr. Thellusson had suffered chiefly through his having ventured to pay his bills before the or-

dinary period, which he was said also to have been led to do by some words which dropt from Mr. Tierney, and which Mr. Thelluffon happened to have construed into an implication that there would be no petition. Mr. Thornton said, that he anxiously wished that some means might be devised of securing an universal attention to the requisitions of the Treating Act, instead of that partial and accidental enforcement of it which now took place. He professed himself a friend to that act, and to the utmost purity that could be introduced into elections in every respect.

Mr. Thornton concluded by observing, that the petition in his hand was signed by about 1150 electors, which was a somewhat greater number than had voted for Mr. Tierney, and might be considered to express the sense of a majory of the electors of Southwark.

The petition was read as follows :

“ The petition of the under-signed electors of the antient town and borough of Southwark, sets forth, that the petitioners have been informed of the report made to the House of Commons appointed to try the matter of the petition of George Tierney, Esq. against the return of the High Bailiff of the said borough to the precept last directed to him for the election of a burges to serve in Parliament for the said borough, to which precept the said High Bailiff had made his return, that George Woodford Thelluffon, Esq. was duly elected, and under which return the said George Woodford Thelluffon had been allowed to take the oaths and his seat in the House as a representative for the said borough in Parliament: the petitioners were greatly concerned in finding, that the Select Committee, appointed to try the merits of the said petition, had determined that the said George Woodford Thelluffon was not eligible at the last election, and that the said Committee had farther resolved, that George Tierney, Esq. was duly elected, and ought to have been returned; and that, in consequence of such report, the Clerk of the Crown had been required to erase the name of the said George Woodford Thelluffon, and to insert that of the said George Tierney in the place thereof on the records of the House, as a representative for the said borough in Parliament, under the authority of such resolution: and that the petitioners, always desirous of maintaining entire the high constitutional respect which they owe to the House, request that they may be allowed to state the hardships to which they feel themselves subjected upon this occasion. When the petitioners became informed of the determination on the former petition, which deprived Mr. Thelluffon of his seat, and declared the election void, they forthwith endeavoured to

obtain the best information, whether, in consequence of such decision, the said George Woodford Thelluffon was rendered ineligible for the next election. For this purpose, they examined with great care and attention the several enactments of the 7th of King William the Third (under which act the said former election had been declared void) the judgement of the petitioners as to the extent of the disabilities created by that statute, (which appeared to them to reach no farther than to make void such election,) meaning, as the petitioners understood, such election as the said act appears solely to be in relation to, namely, the election in which practices, by that act made unlawful, had been proved against the sitting Member, was not only fortified by great legal authorities, but was also sanctioned by the determination made respecting that statute by a Select Committee of the House, viz. the second Norwich case in 1787, which determination, the petitioners were informed, has ever been considered as conformable to law; but the petitioners were (as they conceive) fully warranted in the conclusion, that the said George Woodford Thelluffon was competent and eligible to be elected and returned, because the High Bailiff, who is the presiding and returning officer at such elections for the said borough, on the morning of the said election, at the time of the proclamation from the front of the Court of Hustings, viz. on the 18th of November last, did publicly declare to the said electors, that he, the High Bailiff, did consider the said George Woodford Thelluffon as eligible, and that he should, when called upon, offer his name to them as a candidate: that the petitioners humbly submit to the consideration of the House, that, under the events of these proceedings, a great majority of the electors of this antient borough now feel themselves deprived of their due representation in the House, and perceive a person, who never was entrusted or deputed by any majority of the electors, now sitting in Parliament under the character of their representative: that the petitioners have duly considered the act of the 10th of his present Majesty to regulate the trials of controverted elections, and observing, that, under the directions of the said act, the decisions of such Select Committees shall be final as between the parties, are laid under great difficulty (somewhat doubting whether they, as electors, are, in the present case, parties within the meaning of the act) in asking from the House any redress for what they conceive to be an hardship and a grievance, but, in justice to themselves, to their posterity, and to all other electors, they humbly hope and pray, that the House will be pleased to consider whether the Report of the Committee, under which the said George Tierney has obtained his seat, may be, in any manner, brought under the consideration of the

House, and, if not, whether any proceedings ought to be had for the better security in future of the rights of election for Members to serve in Parliament, and to render more explicit, and free from doubt, the provisions of the act of the 7th of William the Third, under the common and usual understanding of which the petitioners (together with a great majority of the electors of the said borough) gave their votes for the said George Woodford Thellusson at the last election, and now find themselves deprived of their election franchise, not only without having received any sufficient notice to warn them against voting for the said George Woodford Thellusson; but, on the contrary, after having been informed, through their proper organ (as they conceive) that the said George Woodford Thellusson was lawfully competent to be a candidate at such election."

The petition was ordered to lie upon the table.

Mr. TIERNEY said, that it was certainly unpleasant for him to observe the insinuations which this petition contained. He had hoped, that if ever any man had procured a seat in that House upon fair constitutional grounds, he was that person, 'He therefore felt it unpleasant that the mode in which he had obtained his seat in the House, should daily in the newspapers be reprobated as unconstitutional, and he wished for an opportunity to meet the imputation. He differed from the honourable gentleman who said that the petition contained the sense of the electors of Southwark. A public meeting called for the avowed purpose was the proper mode of collecting the sense of the electors, but here no such thing had taken place. Private letters had been sent round to those who were supposed to be hostile to his interest, and in this way the signatures of the petition had been procured. He hoped that the honourable gentleman would name some day for taking this petition into consideration, and move something specific upon its general prayer. He wished most anxiously that his real situation in the House might be ascertained. He could have wished that the honourable gentleman, who, indeed, had informed him that the petition was to be presented, had likewise apprized him of its contents, for till now he was totally ignorant of its purport; he therefore hoped that a day would be named when he should have an opportunity of replying to the petition, so far as it regarded himself.

Mr. THORNTON said, that he had been merely the organ of the body of his constituents by whom the petition was presented, and only explained the sentiments it contained.

Mr. TIERNEY said, that he was to understand then, that any one sitting Member might present a petition against another sit-

ting Member. Here was a petition laid upon the table against him, which he had no opportunity of answering. What to do he knew not; the only thing that could be done, was, perhaps, for him to complain, that under the mask of a petition, an insult had been offered to a Member of the House.

Mr. PARKER COKE moved for the second reading of the bill for the better trying of offences within certain local jurisdictions and towns corporate. He stated the difficulty which had been felt in the distribution of justice, from the prejudices which sometimes existed where the Jury was composed of persons residing in the neighbourhood of persons to be tried. The principle of the bill was, to enable persons within limited jurisdictions to apply to the country at large. In several places of this description too, in Pool, Hull and Southampton, it was the practice to allow the prisons to be full before the prisoners were brought to trial, from which great oppression and inconvenience arose.

Mr. JEFFERY (of Pool) said, that within his recollection no such grievance had existed at Pool; he did not think that ever more than three persons were confined at once for offences of the description to which this bill was to apply previous to their being brought to trial. He was not, however, hostile to the principle of the bill.

Tuesday, 21st February.

A Committee was balloted for to try the merits of the petition on the contested election for the borough of Canterbury, when the following Members were chosen:

George Vanfittart,	Richard Wilson,
Sir Richard Carr Glynn,	Christopher Arkinson,
John Angerstein,	Lord Harvey,
H. Joddrell,	Lord Huntingfield,
E. W. Bootle,	Sir W. Lemon,
Edward Rushworth,	Lord Tyrconnel.
T. Jones,	
<i>Nominees</i> —R. P. Carew,	Hon. St. Andrew St. John.

The following Members were appointed, by ballot, a Committee to try the merits of the petition relative to the election of the borough of Tewkesbury:

Lord Hawkesbury,	Sir Martin Browne Folkes,
Hon. Geo. Walpole,	Sir G. Douglas,
Hon. H. Lascelles,	John Baring,
Francis Dickens,	Sir Francis Baring,

J. Scroope Bernard,
Sir John Aubery,
Edmund Bastard,

T. S. Bucknall,
W. Dickenson, jun.

Nominees—Daniel Parker Coke, Charles Bragge.
Adjourned.

Wednesday, 22d February.

The ballot for a Committee to try the merits of the election for Inverkeithing, which stood for to-morrow, was put off to the 16th of March.

Mr. WHITBREAD said, that in consequence of a request from a right honourable gentleman opposite to him, he should defer his motion for an inquiry into the conduct of Administration respecting the late expedition of the French against Ireland, from Friday to Monday next.

Colonel PORTER said, that he had read with attention the Southwark petition upon the table, and he conceived that language had been used in it so insulting to the Committee, of which he had been a Member, that if no other efficient person brought the subject before the House, he should himself make a motion upon it on Thursday se'nnight.

Mr. Alderman LUSHINGTON gave notice, that he should, on Friday next, make a motion upon the subject of the losses sustained by the merchants in importing grain during the late scarcity.

The commitment of the Quakers' bill, upon the suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was put off to Friday.

Thursday, 23d February.

Mr. POWYS gave notice of an intention to move, on some future day, for a bill to amend and explain the late act for the regulation of weights and measures.

The following list was given in of Members balloted to try the merits of the petition against the return for Carlisle :

Sir J. Morshead,
M. G. Lewis, Esq.
J. Amyatt, Esq.
J. Sargent, Esq.
E. M. Munday, Esq.
R. B. Robson, Esq.
G. Ellis, Esq.

T. Kemp, Esq.
W. Manning, Esq.
T. Johnes, Esq.
Hon. E. Lascelles,
M. Singleton, Esq.
Hon. W. Broderick.

Nominees—M. Wood, Esq.

J. Harrison, Esq.

Friday, 24th February.

On the motion of Mr. GREY, the ballot for the Committee on the election for the county of Kent, which stood for Thursday next, was postponed, on account of the Circuits, till Thursday the 4th of April.

Mr. HARRISON gave notice, that on Tuesday se'nnight he would move for a Committee, to consider of a mode of reducing the public expenditure by a retrenchment of the expence of offices and sinecure places.

Mr. Alderman LUSHINGTON rose to state the grounds of a motion, of which he had given notice on a former day, for a Committee to investigate the causes and the amount of the losses which had been sustained by the merchants who had, in a time of public scarcity, supplied the country with corn, and to consider if there were any mode of indemnifying them for these losses. He was aware that, in proposing this motion, he had to encounter a strong general principle, to which it was certainly proper in most cases to adhere. He considered himself, however, as warranted to state the present instance as one of those which might fairly be urged as an exception to the common rule. He professed, in bringing forward the subject, neither to be the advocate of the sufferers nor a complainant of personal damage, but to be actuated by a sincere desire to promote the peace of the country, and an ardent zeal to encourage that public spirit by which alone, in critical emergencies, it could be preserved. He was entirely unacquainted with those individuals who had suffered in consequence of their exertions in importing grain into the country, at a time when it was threatened with one of the greatest calamities incident to man; and therefore he felt for them only as he would feel for others who had been subjected to a severe and ruinous loss. But it was extremely necessary for the House, overlooking all individual considerations, to take care that those who, by their spirited and patriotic exertions, had afforded seasonable relief to the country, should not be subjected to such a loss as might in future discourage and check that spirit from which the public as a body had so eminently benefited. When the scarcity prevailed, the purchases made by Government were found to be very inadequate to supply the demands of the market. It was therefore found advisable to encourage private speculation, in importing an article of the first necessity then so much wanted. Prompted by a desire of supplying the existing wants of the country, and encouraged by the inducements held forth by the Legislature, the merchants imported a vast quantity of corn on their own ac-

count, the consequence of which was, the price fell between 60 and 70 per cent. In 1795, before individuals engaged in the speculation, Government imported only 250,000 quarters, whereas in 1796 there were about 700,000 quarters imported. But this was not all ; his argument derived strong collateral aid from the interference of Government in the market. By supplying the market regularly every week with a certain quantity of corn at a certain price, the merchants were of course under the necessity of selling what they had imported at the same price, and thus were deprived of those profits which, from the state of the country, they had been given to expect. Upon these grounds he hoped the House would be disposed to grant them some relief ; he therefore moved, " that a Committee be appointed to investigate the causes and the amount of the losses sustained by the merchants in importing corn into the country at a time of great public scarcity, and to consider of some mode of indemnifying them for those losses."

Mr. SHERIDAN did not oppose the appointment of a Committee ; he hoped, however, that it would be an open one. He rose merely to ask the worthy Alderman one question. He had no doubt that the merchants who engaged in the speculation of importing grain were influenced by views of personal interest, as well as by motives of public spirit. Now he wished to know, whether, if the harvest had failed, and the price of corn of course had risen, they would have given up any part of their profits to the public ?

Mr. Alderman LUSHINGTON explained, that he did not mean to state that the merchants had been guided in their speculations solely by disinterested motives ; but he contended that they were urged and impelled by Government to enter into the speculation, and that as they had sustained severe losses by yielding to this recommendation, they had a fair and just claim to indemnity. As to what would have happened if the price of corn had risen instead of falling, he was fully convinced that, had this unfortunately been the case, the situation of the country would have been truly deplorable ; for he doubted, much as the people were inclined to obey the laws, whether they would have remained long in subjection to them, had the price of bread continued to rise after it was at fifteen pence the quartern loaf.

An open Committee was appointed to consider the motion.

Mr. POWYS moved for leave to bring in a bill to explain and amend an act passed two years ago for regulating weights and measures. Leave was given.

The order of the day for the House to resolve itself into a Cⁿ

mittee of the whole House on a bill for granting relief to the people called Quakers, and for taking their solemn affirmation in criminal as well as civil cases, being read, and the question being put that the Speaker now leave the chair,

Sir W. SCOTT, after an apology for the alteration which had taken place in his opinion since last year, stated at considerable length his objections to the farther progress of the bill. They pointed chiefly to that branch of the bill which respected the payment of tithes. With regard to the other branch, of making the affirmation of Quakers evidence in criminal cases, he was willing to confide in the judgment of those who had greater experience than himself. He professed himself to be no enemy to toleration, but by toleration he meant that kind of toleration which, as it affected religious opinions, was not inconsistent with the civil rights of property. It was not enough that religious opinions should be sincere, in order to give them a claim to protection; for if they injured the civil rights of others, they could have no such pretensions. If civil inconveniencies arose from certain religious opinions, they ought to fall upon the holders of these opinions, and not upon the innocent part of the community. The opinions held by the Quakers were of such a nature as to affect the civil rights of property, and therefore he considered them as unworthy of legislative indulgence. It was erroneous to suppose that tithes were a species of property merely ecclesiastical. In many cases they were lay property. A large proportion of tithe property was in lay hands under the title of lay appropriations. But the Quakers refused to pay tithes to the appropriator, as well as to the clergyman, though the property had been in his possession for more than three hundred years, a period much longer than the persuasion upon which they acted had been in existence. How then did the case stand of this tithe property, which was more ancient and more strictly guarded by the Legislature than any other. This was the very property of which the opinion of the Quaker led him to rob the possessor. No matter whether religion was or was not the foundation of his opinion, no religion could sanction civil injustice. He asked, whether it did not sound odd that a man should take a farm, and get an allowance from the landlord for what he was to pay in tithes, and by way of putting this allowance in his pocket, plead that his conscience would not permit him to employ it for the purposes for which it was intended? Could such a conduct, he demanded, be reconciled with any standard of justice, or was any act entertaining such principles worthy of being patronised by the Legislature? He submitted it, therefore, to the wisdom of the House, whether, on account of such

absurd fancies, if they were not something worse, they would venture to change the regulations of civil property? He was more inclined to doubt the policy of the bill, because this was the first time that the Legislature had been called upon to recognize such a principle. In the preamble of the bill, he had observed, that it pretended to be brought in for the relief of the Quakers from imprisonment. Here the learned gentleman desired that the seventh and eighth of William the Third might be read. Which being done, he observed, that so far from its being the intention of this statute to relieve the Quakers from the persecution of other men, as had been insinuated, it was meant to relieve other men from the persecution of the Quakers; for if any man withheld from him what was his due, that man was his persecutor; and though he did it from religious motives, still his conduct was persecution. He asked, whether it was really proper to sanction a violation of the rights of property upon the ground of private opinion, on whatever foundation that opinion might rest? He cautioned the House of stamping such a procedure with their authority at a time when it was so fashionable, as it was now, to hold out wild and dangerous opinions respecting property. Who knew but the next step might be a refusal to pay rent? He believed that there were some texts of Scripture which might be wrested in favour of this opinion; nay, they might even go so far as to hold it irreligious to pay their debts, because they owed no man any thing but love. He had seen a number of pamphlets, in which all men of property were pelted with texts of Scripture, and represented as monopolizers, who ought to share what they possessed with those who had not had such a liberal share of the good things of fortune dealt out to them. Such opinions were justly considered as worthy only of derision; but he asserted, that they admitted of as good a defence as those upon which the Quakers professed to act. If the Quakers pleaded sincerity in their own behalf, so might the partizans of the levelling system; or if the levellers were accused of interested views in wishing to dispossess others of their property; so might also the Quakers, who refused to pay that property to which others were entitled. He wished the Legislature therefore seriously to reflect before they should sanction and invite such fancies which might certainly be productive of many great evils. He reminded the House also of the ground upon which their indulgence was claimed, not because of other religious opinions held by the Quakers; not because they held it unlawful to wear a button on their hats, or to use the second person plural, but because they deemed it improper to pay tithes. If the principle of this indulgence was once admitted, others might claim the benefit of it,

and the sect of antient Christians would soon become the most numerous and flourishing in the kingdom. The learned gentleman next proceeded to advert to the other ground on which his learned friend (Mr. Serjeant Adair) defended the principle of the bill, namely, that it would facilitate the payment of tithes. Here he could not but remark a striking inconsistency in the defence; for if the Quakers really held it unlawful to pay tithes, how came they to apply for a bill, the object of which was, to facilitate the payment of them? The argument stood thus: the Quakers considered themselves as unjustifiable in paying tithes, except they were compelled; the House was therefore desired to accommodate the mode of compulsion to their wishes. He then put the case either way, either that they did pay tithes at present without compulsion, or that they did not. If they did not, their refusal was a persecution of the holders of tithes, and the remedy ought to be a prompt and efficacious one, otherwise the tithe-holder would be an owner, not of property, but of suits. The fact, however, he believed to be notoriously otherwise, and that the Quaker at present pays tithes, not from actual compulsion, but under the apprehension of compulsion. Since this was the case, why should the remedy be placed at a greater distance, and thus rendered less prompt and less efficacious? For what was the remedy that was proposed to take the penalty off the person of the Quaker, and to put it upon his property by sequestration? To this mode there were strong objections. There was no process of sequestration in the Ecclesiastical Courts, in which many of these causes were agitated. At any rate the process of sequestration was accompanied with so many difficulties, and liable to so many failures, that it would produce such a diminution of the security of that species of property as must necessarily operate as a diminution of its value. Besides, the very remedy itself implies compulsion, and his yielding to this compulsion shews that his scruple had no foundation, except they were to suppose that he had a religious scruple to sequestration still stronger than that he entertained against paying tithes. Sir W. Scott next stated his objection to the provisions of the bill respecting the process being carried on before the Justices; first, upon the ground of the general obscurity of the subject, and the intricacy of particular questions which frequently occurred; and secondly, from the influence of local and personal prejudices, from which that useful and highly respectable class of men were not altogether exempted. He controverted the statement of the severities exercised against the Quakers from documents collected from the registers of the different Courts. He had directed inquiries to be made of the prosecutions which had been carried on

against the Quakers for the last twenty years, and he found that in the diocese of Canterbury there had not been one; that in the diocese of Bristol one had been commenced, in consequence of which the tithes were immediately paid; that there had been one in the diocese of Litchfield and Coventry against six Quakers, but that no imprisonment had taken place; and that there had only been one other in the diocese of Worcester, where the Quaker was imprisoned, but was liberated in a short time from an error in the writ, in virtue of which the punishment was inflicted. There had been some, but very few, in the Court of Exchequer during that period. Hence he inferred, that tithes were paid at present in an easy and inoffensive manner, and that no new regulations were necessary.

The necessary effect of the bill would be an increase of suits, and additional difficulties to the proprietor in the exercise of his rights. Things went on smoothly enough already, and any regulations upon the subject were not at present required. He well knew, from the character of his learned friend, that he was actuated by no unworthy or sinister motives. It was well known, however, that opinions hostile to tithes were abroad, and it was not impossible that something of this kind might be connected with the present application. The effect of the measure would inevitably tend to weaken the security of property, and the House ought maturely to consider that attacks upon it were always begun where it was conceived to be most vulnerable, and in subjects where prejudices against it prevailed. A memorable example of this occurred in another country. In France, first the tithes of the Clergy were attacked; the property of the Church was then all seized; the manor rights of proprietors were next attacked, titles and nobility followed: property was the next object of plunder, till scenes of injustice and disorder ensued, which struck at the repose and tranquillity of Europe. He therefore must oppose the farther progress of a bill, the principle of which he considered to be so objectionable.

Mr. Serjeant ADAIR said, after the discussions which this subject had last year undergone, after the bill which he had the honour to bring in had obtained the approbation of the House with considerable deliberation, though without a single division; after the discussion which had been provoked upon the subject throughout the kingdom, he confessed that he was a little surprized that in this stage, for the first time, any thing like a serious objection had been urged against the measure. His learned friend had prefaced his opposition with an apology personal to him—an apology by no means necessary. Whenever the mind was enlightened, from whatever that light proceeded, it ought, in preference to every consideration,

to direct a public man in the discharge of his duty. He acquitted his learned friend from the imputation of being guided by any other motives than those grave considerations which he himself assigned ; he knew his candour and honour too well to suppose any other ; it was better, however, instead of stopping to inquire how the motives of his opposition had thus late arisen, to examine the weight of the arguments he had employed. The bill, when originally introduced, had undergone considerable discussion, and received several alterations, with which he had complied rather in conformity to the wishes of others than his own judgment ; he had likewise thought it better to introduce the bill into the present Parliament, in the shape in which it had obtained the approbation of the last, than under its original form. With regard to the principle of his learned friend, on which he founded his objection to the measure, that no respect ought to be shewn to religious scruples where they went to affect property, he could not agree with him to the extent in which it had been stated. He thought that some respect ought to be shewn even to those religious scruples which might be considered as absurd, though they involved this consequence ; and they might even be the object of that good-natured toleration which his learned friend mentioned. His learned friend said, that to such scruples the legislature ought not at all to yield. He admitted that the legislature ought not so far to yield to them as to lessen the security of property ; but yet he thought it wise, just and humane, to give them such indulgence as was consistent with its most perfect security. Alterations in the laws which tended to afford ease to the person who entertained the scruple, without injuring the property which it regarded, he would contend, were wise, just, and humane ; and till his learned friend could show that the present bill would actually produce the effect which he deprecated, he would not consent to the application of his principle. An expression in the act of King William, on which this measure was founded, had been quoted by his learned friend. The conduct of that Parliament, by which that act had been passed, it would appear, however, was more liberal than their language. The scruples of the Quakers were called pretended. He believed that these scruples were perfectly real. They lead to suffering and to difficulty. The hardships they produced were a pledge of their sincerity. Were they of a kind which the interest of the parties might suggest, they certainly ought not to be encouraged. Such, however, was the liberality of feeling which actuated that Parliament, that they yielded to scruples which they called pretended ; and what then should be their conduct when they believed the scruples to be

real? Last year when the bill was under consideration, there had been but one opinion concerning the character, the submissive conduct, the inoffensive manners of the people for whose relief it was intended. Such had been the opinion which had been formed upon an experience of their good behaviour, and an observation of their principles. When the act of King William passed, they were a new sect, and their principles were little known, which might give rise to the expression which had been quoted. But notwithstanding this, they did in fact adopt the principle of the present bill. By making their affirmation evidence, their scruples were indulged in matters of the highest importance. Upon this point, where property is so much concerned, and which on so many occasions affects it so nearly, the legislature did yield to these scruples. His learned friend, likewise, (with no better success to his own argument) had drawn another objection to the measure from this statute of King William, and in asking which to be read, he only had done what he himself had intended to move. He had said that this act was not intended for the benefit of the Quakers, but was stated to be for the more easy recovery of tithes, and was meant for the advantage of the claimant. This, in fact, was the very object of the present bill, and his learned friend in his zeal against the measure, had confirmed the argument he maintained, that it would be more beneficial to the tithe-holder than the system that is now followed. In whatever view, then, the act of King William might be considered, whether of relief to the Quaker, or benefit to the proprietor, it created a new jurisdiction, the advantage of which, so far as it went, was proved by a century's experience; and he would ask, if it had ever been known to be attended with any instance of inconvenience? His learned friend had indulged himself in putting several fanciful cases, and supposed a great number of pretended scruples. There was one which was designed to raise alarm in the minds of the country gentlemen. It was stated as a possible case, that farmers might, from some pretended scruple, refuse to pay their rent. But even for this the law had already provided precisely the very remedy which the bill meant to introduce. By this, those who should take such a scruple into their heads, and refuse to pay their rent, would be treated just like those who refuse to pay their rent without any scruple. The summary remedy, by distress, the law already afforded. The country gentlemen, therefore, need not be alarmed that their tenants should take such whimsies in their heads, when they were sure that they would soon have a warrant of distress at their backs, which would compel payment. His learned friend had been particularly unfor-

fortunate in this supposition, as it led so directly to the consideration of the remedy, which, in that case, as well as in the present, is the best and most convenient, and by which the claim is made effectual with least litigation and expence. Pamphlets, containing absurd and ridiculous doctrines, had likewise been mentioned, in order to favour the idea of danger. These, he was sure, were not the grave considerations by which his learned friend was actuated. He said, how was it possible to distinguish between the pretended and the real scruples? He would answer, by inquiry whether the scruples were favourable or hostile to the interest of the parties, and if his learned friend could show that interest supported the scruple, he would prove more for his argument than he had hitherto done. It was stated that the Quaker had an interest in the scruples he professed. He could not conceive, however, what interest could prompt a man to profess scruples which, if maintained, led to imprisonment for life; or to stand a suit for a few shillings, which would raise the expence to thirty times the original demand. This surely was the oddest kind of interest ever heard. There was no advantage gained by delay; on the contrary, it was attended with additional trouble and expence. While such was the case, he would leave it to his learned friend to explain the inconsistency, and to reconcile the interest with the scruple. It was said too that the same indulgence must be granted to all who should take it into their heads to entertain the same scruples. To this he would answer, yes; when the cases occurred, if the scruples were real, and if they were contrary to the interest of the parties. With respect to the opinion they were to form of the wisdom of the law, which had been made in compliance with them, it was immaterial whether the scruples were real or pretended. The principle had been sanctioned by the legislature. He had heard it whispered that the York case was an instance of the inconvenience of the jurisdiction created by this bill. With this case, however, he was acquainted, and the inconvenience was occasioned by a departure from the jurisdiction. He did not arraign the conduct of individuals in the hardships which had arisen, for then he would have acted differently; he was convinced that the grievances arose from the law, and that a legislative remedy was required. When he first heard of the York case, he had looked into it with attention, and upon it he had formed his judgment that an extension of the jurisdiction created by the act of King William was required. He had seen with pleasure that no innovation was necessary, that no new principles would be introduced into the system of our laws and Constitution. The sum of 10*l.* to which the jurisdiction was originally

confined, was not a small sum in tithes ; the remedy would be complete by extending the principles already laid down. His learned friend had stated, that discovery was the only case when the jurisdiction might be changed, for when a question of titles arose, the parties were at liberty to apply to the courts ; when this happened the Quaker then gave up the benefit of the jurisdiction of the Justices. Notwithstanding what had been said by his learned friend, he still was of opinion that the measure would be for the benefit of the holder. It was in fact balancing property against personal liberty. The tithe-holder would be enabled to recover his claim, instead of merely obtaining the imprisonment of the Quaker for life. His learned friend had said a great deal to prove that tithes were property, and in this he perfectly agreed with him. The object of the measure was to enable the tithe-holder to recover his claim without the necessity of a suit. His learned friend seemed to state it as if the bill was to give the holder a law-suit instead of his demand ; what, however, is the case at present ? If the Quaker is either conscientious or obstinate, an expensive and tedious suit is the consequence, which under the present bill would be avoided. No suit at all would be necessary ; the demand would be recovered in a mode similar to distress. In reality, he was surprized at the objections urged by his learned friend. They seemed as if intended as a contrast to its regulations, and prove the excellency of the principle of the bill, which went to remedy those very evils which his learned friend had stated as objections. Was it no benefit to the holder that a great deal of time and expence were saved in the recovery of his claim ? Was it no advantage that he got his property instead of the person ? Was it no benefit to the Quaker that he escaped the calamity of imprisonment for life, which might now be his fate ? Instead of the bodies of seven obstinate or conscientious men, the tithe-holder would be able, in two days, by a summary and cheap mode of proceeding, to recover his money. Whatever prejudice and alarm might at present exist among the clergy with regard to the effect of this bill, he was convinced it would be overcome by the House, and that after a fair experiment of its operation for a limited time, the clergy themselves would join with the Quakers in their wishes for its renewal. His learned friend asked, if the Quakers petitioned for the relief contained in this bill ? To this he answered, they did not ; the Quakers had petitioned for relief as to the imprisonment of their persons. In his situation, as a Member of Parliament, he was to consider what was wise and proper to be done, not what was agreeable to the wishes of those who were the petitioners. The

Quakers were not answerable for what the bill contained; he alone was responsible for its contents. It was for the House, however, to determine whether they would entertain the bill, and sanction the purposes it was intended to serve. Among the different arguments which his learned friend had suggested in favour of the measure, which he himself might have overlooked, there was one of which he was aware. It was said that the remedy should be prompt and efficacious. This indeed was the very object of the bill; for at present, if the Quaker was obstinate, no court could enable the holder to recover his tithes, while under this bill the claim might easily be made good. It was said that at present those who refused to pay were obliged to do it by the terror of the law. He was surprized that his learned friend should have employed such an argument. In the same manner the torture and every sort of abuse might be justified. A degree of terror might be proper, but it was an object of policy to render it proportionate to the offences. Terror too was not the way that ought to be employed to effect obedience, when other means could be obtained. It was better to facilitate the object by the intervention of legislative regulations. This then was the object, to remove that terror which was inconsistent with humanity, and to prevent offences (if they were to be called offences) by removing the necessity. It was much better to enable the holder to take tithes that were before him, than to frighten the Quaker into a payment which his scruples forbade, and which, if he was obstinate, might be altogether defeated. The mode of sequestration was objected to by his learned friend, and the inconvenience of the holder being obliged to look for the property of the Quaker at a distance, was also stated; but it was to be observed that tithes differed from every other species of debt, because here the fund for payment was presupposed, and it must always be in the power of the holder to make his claim effectual, since property to ten times its amount must always exist. Sequestration too was not to be employed till the warrant of the Justices had been put in force, which, in almost every case, would supersede the necessity of the second process. Indeed that clause had been put in the bill by the suggestion of his learned friend, or some other person who took a part in the discussion when it was first introduced, for he himself had not considered it to be requisite, although it was impossible that, in some cases, the mode of sequestration might be employed. These, however, were matters rather for the consideration of the Committee, and did not go to the principle of the bill. With regard to the dangers with which the measure might be attended, he differed most widely from his

learned friend. He was sorry to hear that opinions hostile to tithes were abroad, but he did not imagine they existed in any great degree. For his own part, he thought the clergy ought to be provided, and well provided for. If any opinions hostile to tithes existed, were they not more likely to be removed by the display of mild, cheap and expeditious modes of levying, than by cruel, tedious and expensive proceedings? If such dangers actually existed, it would furnish an argument for going much farther than the present measure proposed. If there were people who had sinister motives in the present application, they would find them defeated in the agreeable and conciliating effects which it was fitted to produce. With regard to the extravagant and dangerous doctrines which had gone abroad in the world, his opinions were known. Sure he was, however, that every provision which tends to make the weight of property less oppressive, and to render the mode of raising contributions less felt by those who contribute, must tend to banish those opinions that would shake the solidity of its foundations. The object of the bill was to facilitate the claim of the tithe-holder, and to render it less burdensome to the person from whom it is due. With regard to the threat which his learned friend said was held out in case the parties removed from the jurisdiction of the Justices, he was led to think, from considerations of expedience which in his mind had always the highest weight, that the option should be taken away. From experience it had been seen that no inconvenience arose from confining the jurisdiction, with regard to tithes, within the fifty-one parishes of the city of London, to the Magistrates, under the single exception of their refusing to act. In the same manner no inconvenience would probably arise from a similar confined jurisdiction in the present case. At all events, however, it was probable that the tithe-holder would take that mode of recovering his claim, which was cheap and easy, instead of that which was tedious and expensive. He would submit to the House then, whether this was a bill so radically defective in principle, as to preclude any farther discussion. For his own part he thought it was calculated to be equally beneficial to every party interested, and in this opinion he would remain till enlightened by the vote of the House.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL said, the present measure was founded upon an assumption that certain grievances existed; that formed the first question of consideration. He maintained, that no grievances of the nature complained of existed, because there did not exist those scruples of conscience from which those grievances were supposed to have their origin. He desired the learned and

honourable gentleman to adduce such proofs as should satisfy the House; that any oppression had been used against the Quakers. For the last twenty years there had been none imprisoned for conscience sake: for the York case, of which the House had heard so much, did not fall within that description. And he would venture to assert, that if a bill could be framed, such as those would wish who had merely pretended scruples of conscience, and whose real object was the interested view of eluding payment of a just and legal due, it would be such a bill as now was presented: in fact, it would be holding out an encouragement to men of such principles.

His learned friend had noticed, that tithes were not merely ecclesiastical dues, but a great part was also in the hands of lay impropriators, and must be considered as civil property. When he saw this sort of property in the hands of Quakers, when he saw them leasing tithes, the impropriators of tithes, and collectors, he must infer, that they had no religious or conscientious scruples upon the subject. Nor could he suppose that they held it unlawful to pay tithes, when he saw many respectable men, of that class, themselves, in possession of them, and collecting them from others. The law, as it now stood, was completely adequate for their recovery; seldom was there application, even to a justice; and in general, Quakers paid their tithes as other men. The case of those, now prisoners in York, of which they had heard, and which the learned Serjeant admitted gave rise to his present bill, was attended with circumstances peculiar to itself. In that case, when the Clergyman demanded his tithes, they set up a *modus*; and this very plea, on their part, was an admission of the right: for what was *modus* but a manner of paying a commutation in lieu of tithes in kind? This custom, the Magistrates, of course, could not try; and the Clergyman was obliged to try the cause in the Exchequer. The learned gentleman then read extracts from the cause. In their answer, he observed, they did not hesitate solemnly to affirm; that there existed an antient and laudable custom of a *modus*; yet this, that they so solemnly affirmed, they had not the least proof to support. This, therefore, the Clergyman resisted, on the ground of his right; but it was evident that their objection was not to the payment of tithes, but to the *quantum* demanded. In this bill, a great burden was to be thrown upon the Magistrate; for frequently the *quantum* of the tithe was matter of litigation and dispute.

In Quakers of respectability, whom he had known, he never found any of those rigid scruples; and in all the experience he had had, and he had had much, he never found Quakers concerned merely as Quakers, but frequently joined with and pleading as

other defendants: About sixty years ago a similar measure was attempted to be brought forward. It had been very fully discussed in the other House by Lord Talbot and Lord Hardwicke, and, after the most mature consideration, rejected. Since that time, a period of sixty years had elapsed, with the law as it now stood, without any evil consequence resulting. If it happened that a Quaker subjected himself to perpetual imprisonment, he brought himself into that situation, exactly in the same manner as a litigious man who obstinately maintained a suit, and overwhelmed himself with costs. That such consequences should be prevented, if possible, he admitted; and he wished a mode could be devised which might extend to all persons in that situation. From the learned Serjeant's statement, the House might be induced to suppose that he had discovered a mode for the more speedy recovery of tithes; if it were so, why did not the bill come in that shape, that they might debate it? The principle of this seemed to be, that the person should be exonerated, and the property only liable; but of all security for the payment of debts, he considered that which gave the power of taking hold of the person to be the most efficacious, and instanced, that the exemption of the persons of Members of that House from arrests lessened the security of their creditors. He objected to the present bill, as it tended entirely to shake the principle of all processes for the recovery of debts; but did not object to the other part of the bill, which went to render the affirmation of Quakers admissible in criminal as well as civil cases, which he considered as a perfectly distinct object.

Mr. WIGLEY said, he wished merely to draw the attention of the House to the bill which had heretofore passed upon this subject. The House would then clearly see, that the principle of the bill was not a new one, as had been asserted, but that it merely extended the principle of the act of King William, and was intended to enlarge the relief, which that former act was calculated to afford.

Mr. RICHARDS thought the bill unnecessary and inconvenient, because it went to alter the law of the land. How could any question of property be a subject of religious scruple, which could exist only in matters of faith? The same scruples of conscience forbade Quakers to pay taxes; yet they were ordered to pay these by their elders. That man could not have much conscience or honesty, who withheld from another a debt which he knew was by law his due. He did not then think that there existed among them such scruples as had been stated. There was only one Quaker imprisoned in the course of the last twenty years. The whole of the present question amounted to this: that, because certain people

affected to disobey the law of the land, they were on that account to be treated with greater indulgence.

Mr. WILBERFORCE noticed an inconsistency in the arguments of the gentlemen who opposed the bill. They praised the original statute of King William, and yet decried the present bill, which proceeded on the same principle. When the advocates of the bill suggested the propriety of extending the provisions of the statutes, its opponents then talked of the salutary effect to be derived from enforcing provisions of more wholesome severity ; so that from their language there was reason to conclude, that if they had lived in the reign of King William, they would have voted against that statute. If in the present instance they thought so highly of the benefit to be reaped from holding out a system of terror, why did they not act in conforming to their own principle ? Either they ought to move for the repeal of the provisions of the statute of King William, or they ought to support the present bill for the purpose of adopting them to their full extent. Mr. Wilberforce then adverted to the illiberal language that had been held with respect to Quakers, whom he believed to be actuated by scruples sincerely conscientious ; they had fully evinced their integrity by their conduct during the period of a hundred years, and had received proofs of the regard and protection of the Legislature at the best period of our history.

Mr. FRASER reprobated the present bill, as tending to throw odium upon the established church. The Quakers were a body, who evinced the utmost obstinacy and inveteracy in opposition to the laws. They never went to law, but had a mode of deciding their own disputes without any application to Courts of Justice. They were a body of men whom he considered as in no respect entitled to more privileges and immunities than any other class of the community.

Mr. BURTON stated, that there existed no hardships under the present operation of the law ; that the regulations of the bill differed from those of the statute of King William, and would be injurious to the rights of the tithe-owners.

The House divided :

For the question, 33—Against it, 33.

The Speaker gave the casting vote in favour of the Ayes.

The House, therefore, went into a Committee, made a short progress, and agreed to go into a farther Committee on this bill on Tuesday morning next.

Monday, 27th February.

Mr. T. S. D. BUCKNALL rose to call the attention of the House to the late attempt of the French upon Wales. He said, that he saw something exceedingly portentous in the manner in which the enemy had effected a descent upon the coast of Wales with fourteen hundred men, with arms, but without tents or field-pieces. It was a matter very extraordinary that such a number of men should land, form themselves into a body upon a hill, and without shewing any disposition to oppose the force that had marched against them, surrender themselves at discretion. He hoped the House would excuse the alarm which he had taken upon the subject ; but he could not help expressing his fears that the intention of the enemy was merely to load the country with their troops in this manner. He did not know whether bringing the subject in this form was consistent with the rules of Parliament ; but considering the landing of the enemy's troops as the beginning of a dangerous system of invasion, he could not help calling their serious attention to an occurrence so truly alarming. What motive could the French have in landing their men in such numbers as he had just stated, if it was not that which he had just hinted at ? Fourteen hundred men, with arms in their hands, could unquestionably have done something ; but, from their conduct, it appeared clear to him that they had been landed for no other purpose than that of being made prisoners. Under this consideration, he could not help founding an alarm to the country ; and, as he did not know how to act upon the occasion, he begged to be informed what measure was most proper to be adopted upon that occasion, and what motion it would be right for him to propose to the House.

The SPEAKER informed him, that it remained for him to propose some motion to the House, in the form of an address to His Majesty, or in any other manner that his discretion might suggest.

He then moved, " That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, begging to be informed in what manner the enemy had effected a landing on the coast of Wales, what were their intentions in coming thither, and what was to be done upon the occasion ? "

The SPEAKER paused before he put the question, for some Member to second it.

Mr. BUCKNALL asked the Speaker why he did not put the question ?

The SPEAKER informed him, that it was irregular, until seconded by some other Member.

Mr. BUCKNALL then applied to the House for somebody to second it, and asked whether the Member for Hertfordshire would not?

No Member, however, appearing to second the motion, it fell to the ground.

Colonel WOOD said, that in the present state of alarm and public embarrassment, he by no means wished to increase the difficulties which Ministers must necessarily have to encounter. He believed that they would do him the justice to allow, that, for the last six months, he had exerted himself to the utmost of his power to preserve the peace and tranquillity of the country; but when its safety was endangered, and its dearest interests were at stake, he found himself impelled by his duty, as a Member of Parliament, to come forward and suggest such measures as might tend to promote its interests. That an alarm at present existed, no one could doubt who was at all acquainted with the state of the public mind. It was of importance, then, to inquire in what this alarm originated. He confessed it was his opinion that it proceeded from want of confidence in the measures of Ministers; for it could not be alledged that it arose from any great national misfortune, nor were the people of England so defective in courage as to dread the consequence of any invasion which might be attempted against them by the French. He was confident, for his own part, and he was sure that it was the general sentiment, that if ever such an attempt was made, and if the resources of this country were fairly called into action, that it would terminate in ruin and disgrace to the invaders. But if Ministers neglected to adopt even common precautions, it was not to be wondered at that the people should be afraid. He had resolved, therefore, if no other person more accustomed to public speaking than he was, took the lead in the business, that he should bring it forward on the first open day, by moving an inquiry into the measures which Government had taken for the defence of the country. From all that he could learn, he understood that, so far from there being a proper store of arms in the kingdom, that there were barely sufficient for arming the troops at present embodied. In his opinion it would require all the gunsmiths and locksmiths in the kingdom two years to prepare a sufficient quantity of arms for the national defence. At such a period as this, therefore, Government ought to have imported arms from abroad, whereas he was informed that the orders which had been given to some manufacturers were countermanded, and that others of them had refused to execute the orders which they had received, because they were not paid their former accounts. He hoped that the Chancellor of the

Exchequer would not let even this opportunity pass of giving the House some satisfaction upon a subject which was of the last importance to the country, now that it was engaged in an obstinate struggle with a daring, formidable, and rapacious enemy.

Mr. Chancellor PITT did not feel himself called upon to say much on the present occasion, because there was no motion before the House upon which he could regularly speak; and the more so as the speech of the honourable gentleman had not amounted even to a specific notice. He had represented that he had been prompted to the observations he had just made by the present state of the country, as it respected its internal defence. It did, however, so happen, that the motion of an honourable gentleman which stood for this evening naturally led to a full discussion of that important subject; a discussion in which the country was certainly deeply interested, and into which no one was more anxious to enter than his honourable friends and himself. It did so happen also, that, had the honourable gentleman waited till the usual time at which public business commenced, he was just about to repair to the bar of the House, to deliver a message which he had the honour to bring down from His Majesty, containing a gracious communication respecting the present state of public affairs. He hoped, therefore, that the House would excuse him, if at the present moment he declined entering into any explanation of the topics to which the honourable gentleman had alluded; an explanation which would be as unnecessary in substance as irregular in form.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer then repaired to the bar, and brought up a message from the King, of which the following is a copy:

GEORGE R.

His Majesty thinks it proper to communicate to the House of Commons, without delay, the measure adopted to obviate the effects which might be occasioned by the unusual demand of specie lately made from different parts of the country in the metropolis.

The peculiar nature and exigency of the case appeared to require, in the first instance, the measure contained in the order of Council which His Majesty has directed to be laid before the House. In recommending this important subject to the immediate and serious attention of the House of Commons, His Majesty relies with the utmost confidence on the experienced wisdom and firmness of his Parliament for taking such measures as may be best calculated to meet any temporary pressure, and to call forth, in the most effectual manner, the extensive resources of his kingdoms in support of their public and commercial credit, and in defence of their dearest interests.

G. R.

The Order of Council was laid upon the table, of which the following is a copy :

At the Council Chamber, Whitehall, February 26, 1797.

By the LORDS of HIS MAJESTY's Most Honourable PRIVY COUNCIL. Present,

The LORD CHANCELLOR,	Earl SPENCER,
LORD PRESIDENT,	Earl of LIVERPOOL,
Duke of PORTLAND,	Lord GRENVILLE,
Marquis CORNWALLIS,	

Mr. CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

(Signed) W. FAWKENER.

“ Upon the representation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, stating, that from the result of the information which he has received, and of the inquiries which it has been his duty to make respecting the effect of the unusual demands for specie that have been made upon the metropolis, in consequence of ill-founded or exaggerated alarms in different parts of the country, it appears, that unless some measure is immediately taken, there may be reason to apprehend a want of a sufficient supply of cash to answer the exigencies of the public service. It is the unanimous opinion of the Board, that it is indispensably necessary for the public service, that the Directors of the Bank of England should forbear issuing any cash in payment until the sense of Parliament can be taken on that subject, and the proper measures adopted thereupon, for maintaining the means of circulation, and supporting the public and commercial credit of the kingdom at this important conjuncture; and it is ordered, that a copy of this minute be transmitted to the Directors of the Bank of England; and they are hereby required, on the grounds of the exigency of the case, to conform thereto until the sense of Parliament can be taken as aforesaid.

(Signed) W. FAWKENER.”

The message being read,

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, it was his intention at present to say little more than merely move, that His Majesty's message be taken into consideration to-morrow. He took this opportunity, however, of giving notice, that in addition to the address which he meant to move, he should propose that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the outstanding engagements of the Bank, and of the means they had of making good their engagements. When he gave notice of such a proposition, rendered proper by the particu-

lar circumstances of the moment, he had no difficulty in declaring it to be his firm opinion, that not the smallest suspicion could justly be entertained of the solidity of the Bank ; on the contrary, he believed that its resources never were more abundant. Another proposition which he meant to submit to the deliberation of Parliament, and which, in the present circumstances, he had no doubt would be found to be highly expedient, was to declare by law, that the engagements of the Bank at present outstanding, or which may hereafter be contracted to a certain amount, are secured by the public, and that notes instead of cash will be taken by the public in payment of the sums due to them by the Bank. This was a measure which he thought himself warranted to propose at such a conjuncture as the present, and he had no doubt that it would tend very much to confirm the solidity of the Bank capital, an object, the national importance of which could not be disputed. He should not expatiate farther upon the subject at present, having given notice of the propositions which he intended to make. In the interval, between that and to-morrow, gentlemen would have an opportunity of weighing the important topics that would then come under discussion. He was convinced, that when the circumstances of the times were duly considered, that the House would join with him in opinion that the Bank ought to be restrained from making any payments in cash, except in certain cases ; and so sanguine was he in the advantages which would follow from this restriction, that he could not let the subject pass, even on this day, without giving notice of his intentions formally to submit it to the House. He concluded with moving, That His Majesty's message be ordered to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

Mr. FOX said, that although what had been just delivered by the right honourable gentleman could be considered strictly as a notice only of what he intended to bring forward to-morrow, yet at this eventful crisis he did not wish to allow a moment to pass without saying a few words. What may or may not be advisable to be done upon the matter he alluded to, he should now give no opinion. But in respect to the obligation on every Member of that House, and every man in this country, to turn in his mind the subject, to employ the whole activity of his intellect upon it, and to form as good an opinion as he was able upon it, and that without the delay of a single hour, he thought that to give that sort of warning was his duty. On what the right honourable gentleman meant to move to-morrow, he thought it his duty to say a word or two. The right honourable gentleman said, he should move for a Committee of Inquiry into the circumstances of the Bank. To a motion for such

an inquiry, even if moved this day, he should have no objection; it might be useful, as far as it went. But he owned he saw the propriety of that House making an inquiry to a much greater extent. They should inquire not only into the circumstances of the Bank, but also into the circumstances which led to the present embarrassment. The right honourable gentleman had stated something relative to the prosperous state of the Bank, which he would dare to say were warranted, and which, he hoped, would be made manifest in the result of the inquiry. But they should not stop here; they should inquire into all the causes of this necessity; they should be possessed of all the measures that led to this most extraordinary, most novel, and wholly unprecedented scheme to aid our finance, a scheme which no man could think of without shuddering.

With regard to the provisions which the right honourable gentleman pointed out, he had no difficulty in stating the view he had of the matter. With a view, therefore, to what the Minister had stated of the propriety of aiding the security of the bank-notes, of pledging the faith of Government to them, there appeared to him nothing objectionable in such a proposition, but there were in the Minister's speech some general words which might be differently understood by different persons. If the Minister thought that bank notes should be made legal tenders for public purposes, there might be but little, if any, difficulty in assenting to his proposition. But these were very general words, capable of being differently understood by different persons. If the Minister means to make bank notes legal payment from individuals to the public, that was a point liable of course to discussion, but against which he did not see the same objection as if he took the question in another view, for it would be only matter of policy to a limited expence. But if he meant to make bank notes legal payment from the public to the individual, if such a measure, he said, should become necessary, it was a measure which the House could not think of without seeing that it must shake the very foundation of the public credit. What led him to this observation was part of the Minister's speech to-night, and something which he saw in papers which were now before the House. In the Minister's statement of the matter, he set forth the difficulties of the Bank to answer, by payment in cash, for their outstanding engagements. The means of answering these engagements in that way formed the difficulty of the Bank. He had no difficulty in assenting to what the Minister stated upon the subject, as far as payment was to be made to Government. But when he came to reflect upon an order in Council, and on the obedience which he saw the Bank disposed to pay to that order,

the subject became alarming. He did not say that the conduct of the Bank brought on the necessity, but the thing itself appeared to him to be alarming, for the Bank say they will pay Government in bank notes, and that warrants on dividends shall be paid in like manner. The warrants on dividends were the interest of the national debt. He was not now going to anticipate the measure which Parliament should adopt upon this subject, nor to discuss it at length ; but Parliament having passed an act binding the Bank to pay the warrants on dividends not in bank notes, but in money, this, therefore, was a very alarming proposition, and very worthy at least of the serious attention of the House. These observations, he knew, did not apply to Bank Stock ; but they applied to the payment of dividends on other Stock. He did not now press for any explanation upon this topic, but he felt the importance of it to a great degree, for the proposition was certainly novel, unprecedented, and such as the House should not form an opinion upon hastily.

Having said this, he had only to add, that he should endeavour to inform himself as well as he could on the subject, and bear the whole of it in his mind, and he advised every man in that House, and every thinking man in this country, to do the same thing ; for it appeared to him to be of extreme importance, of extreme danger, and might lead to the most dreadful consequences to every individual in this country, and might put an end altogether to its existence as a powerful nation. The House would do nothing useful on this subject if it did not institute an inquiry into the whole of the circumstances that have led us to this dreadful situation.

Mr. Alderman COMBE wished to be informed whether it was the intention of the right honourable gentleman that bank notes were to be taken only by the receivers of the revenue, or that they were to become a legal tender in all money transactions ?

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that in the first instance he meant only to propose that they should be taken on the part of the public ; that after the inquiry of the Committee into the circumstances of the Bank, the Legislature would be enabled to judge whether the remedy to the extent at present supposed was sufficient.

Mr. Alderman COMBE asked, whether it was his opinion that this remedy would be resorted to in the end ?

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, he had no opinion upon the subject.

Mr. FOX asked, if he disclaimed the opinion ?

Mr. Chancellor PITT replied, that he said nothing about it at all.

His Majesty's message was then ordered to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

The order in Council was ordered to be taken into consideration at the same time.

Mr. SHERIDAN rose, not to pursue the observations which had been made upon the present critical state of the country, but to express his surprise that the consideration of the order in Council should be put off for a single day. In the first part of the order he found nothing but an opinion respecting the circumstances of the Bank, as connected with the present state of public affairs; the conclusion of it contained nothing less than positive requisition of all the cash in the Bank—a requisition which, however strange and unconstitutional, the Bank Directors thought themselves bound in duty to obey. The order certainly was of such a nature that the House had a right to expect some explanation on the subject. The conduct of the Minister, however, had suggested to him a motion, upon which he would certainly take the sense of the House, and upon which they ought not to delay a single hour in expressing an opinion. He should endeavour to abstain from expressing those sentiments of indignation which every man must feel on this evening. He could not, however, but remark, that the right honourable gentleman was now acting upon the same system of delusion which had characterised all his Administration. He entertained no doubts about the solidity of the Bank, and would rely more upon their own statement of their solidity than any declaration of of that House; nor did he object to the public pledging their security for the outstanding engagements of the Bank, but he remonstrated strongly against the mode in which the business was brought before the Legislature. What right had Government to exercise a compulsory power over the Bank of England? The fair way would have been for the Bank to have laid a statement of their situation before the House, to have described the causes to which their embarrassments were to be imputed, and to have prayed for that interference in their behalf, which he was sure the Legislature, upon proper grounds, would have been ready to grant. Instead of this, an order of Council had been issued putting the whole cash of the Bank in requisition. And upon what pretence? To satisfy the necessary demands for the public service! What right had Government to the cash of the Bank more than to the cash of any individual in the kingdom? As well, and with full as much justice, might the right honourable gentleman have put in requisition the money of those wealthy Placemen and Pensioners who were planted around him. Nay, this would not have been so bad; for in the present

instance, by an act of compulsion upon the Bank, he was obliging it to break faith with its creditors. And what were these public exigencies on account of which this strange and unprecedented measure was adopted? They must necessarily be such as the public paper securities could not satisfy. With respect to the appointment of a Committee to enquire into the affairs of the Bank, it was notorious that a leak had sprung in the vessel, and it was pretty evident that it had been occasioned by the exportation of specie to foreign countries; as to the criminality of the pilot, that would be matter for future consideration. Taking that for granted, therefore, of which every one was perfectly convinced, that the immense exportation of specie was the cause of the present embarrassments, he should move, “That it is the opinion of this House that no farther exportation of specie or gold should take place for the use of the Emperor, or any other foreign power, until the sense of Parliament should have been taken on the subject, upon a full review of the causes of the present exigencies of the public.” It might be said that in a season of so great difficulties, it was not probable that the Minister of the country would take a step which would add so much to their pressure. With regard to his professions, he had seen him so often abandon them, that he no longer reposed any trust either in his representations or his promises. He now placed as little confidence in his discretion. After his boasting but a few months ago of the high state of public credit; after vaunting his address in filching so much money from the country without its being publicly known, and after bringing down the communication of this day, what confidence could he (Mr. Sheridan) place in his discretion? It was not enough for the House to leave him to be guided by the dictates of his prudence, for prudence they found by dire experience that he did not possess; nor was it their duty to be satisfied by his professions, for they had witnessed his promises no sooner made than broken; they ought to say not only that he ought not, but that he dared not to do it. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) might plead that the faith of the country was pledged to the Emperor; but was not the faith of the Bank also pledged to its creditors? If the right honourable gentleman urged, that withholding supplies from the Emperor would occasion great inconveniences in carrying on the war, he would grant that this might be true; but of two evils they were to choose the least, and then he would ask if there was any man who thought that were we to go on furnishing money to the Imperial army, that this country would find any compensation to their possible, or even probable successes, for the certain evils which it would thereby sustain? He concluded

with repeating his determination to take the sense of the House upon his motion, and with expressing his opinion that if it was negatived the country would one day consider them as the accomplices of Ministers in promoting its destruction.

Mr. NICHOLS thought the motion ought to be immediately adopted, and rose to second it. He pressed the Chancellor of the Exchequer for an answer to the question which had been put to him, whether it was his intention that the notes of the Bank of England should be declared a legal tender from the Bank to the public creditor? If so, he was about to proclaim an act of insolvency! And considering it in this light, he reprobated his silence as an instance of most atrocious arrogance. After animadverting in the severest terms on the confiding majorities in that House, who supported the Minister in every measure, however wild, and sanctioned every part of his conduct, however insolent, he concluded with repeating the question, whether or not bank notes were to be declared a legal tender to the public creditor?

Mr. Chancellor PITT said he was much surprized at the speech and the motion of Mr. Sheridan, but he was much more perplexed by the observations and questions of the learned gentleman who seconded the motion, who to an intricacy which it was impossible to unravel, added an exertion of voice much beyond what he was accustomed to, and an asperity of language which even exceeded that of the honourable mover. He hoped that he would not persist in thinking it atrocious arrogance in him if he did not attempt to answer what he conceived it would be unpardonable arrogance in him to attempt to understand. When a man obtruded his opinion with too much rashness or too much positiveness, then he might be accused of arrogance; but he did not perceive that the man who altogether declined giving an opinion, could incur the imputation. But the learned gentleman seemed to be as ignorant of the forms of the House as of the common mode of business. He might have known that though it be sometimes convenient to ask and to communicate information by question and answer, that no discussion can regularly take place, except when a motion was before the House. With the Speaker's indulgence he was always ready to answer any question respecting public business which it was fair and candid to put; but he saw no reason why opinions upon any subject should be extorted from him before it came regularly under discussion. How did he stand on the present occasion? He had brought down a message from the King, and all that was necessary for him to have said, was to move that it be taken into consideration to-morrow; instead of this, however, he had given notice, which he need

not to have done, of every thing he intended to propose ; but because he had not explained himself upon a subject different from these propositions, he was accused of atrocious arrogance. As to the motion of the honourable gentleman, what was it in point of fact ? A subject of great national importance which ought to be discussed with calmness and firmness, and which had been this day submitted to the deliberation of the House, was deferred for consideration till to-morrow. The honourable gentleman, however, had seized upon one particular branch of that subject, and one of the most important, and pressed the House to come to an immediate decision upon it. This he had done upon two grounds ; 1st, The unconstitutional nature of what he was pleased to term a requisition on the Bank ; and secondly, the mode in which the business was brought before the House. If the public safety required that the measure should be instantly taken, it was surely much better that it should be executed in the most summary way, for had application come from the Bank after danger was apprehended, the apprehensions might have been realized, while the deliberations upon the remedy were pending ; and with respect to the other ground of the motion, it involved the expediency of the order, which would be discussed to-morrow. He could only say that the King's Ministers had been guided by a concern for the public safety ; that if they had trespassed upon the laws, they submitted to the candour of the House, conscious that had they not taken the step which has been adopted they would have been deficient in the first duty they owed to their country. Whether they should be justified, indemnified, or punished, would be matter of subsequent deliberation.

The honourable gentleman asked what right Government had to make a reserve of the cash of the Bank ? He replied, that with the Bank, as a bank, Government had no right to interfere, but he did not think it disingenuous or unfair to state that if Ministers knew there was a greater run upon the Bank, and that more cash was carried from the metropolis than was consistent with the permanence of those sources from which the public service was to be defrayed, it was their duty to interfere. The honourable gentleman ascribed the present diminution of money entirely to the sums which had been sent abroad to the Emperor. So far was this from corresponding with the fact, that last year not the smallest inconvenience was felt, and for this reason, that it was so arranged that but a small proportion of the money sent abroad consisted of specie. Yet this was assumed as a principal ground of the honourable gentleman's motion. He next assumed that the cause of the measure being adopted was the exigency of foreign, not of home service.

And as if these were not enough, he assumes that the House ought to come to an immediate decision upon one branch of a subject, the whole of which was to be discussed to-morrow. In the mean time, what, he asked, would be the effect of this decision were it carried into effect as he would have it? If there was one subject more grave, more weighty, or more important than another, it was the subject of this motion, which the honourable gentleman wished should be decided collaterally, without examination and without notice. His motion would have the effect of a declaration of the British Parliament, that without deliberation they would give no farther aid to the Emperor, even supposing that the war is to be continued. He concluded with moving the order of the day.

Mr. SHERIDAN replied, that if the right honourable gentleman had attended to the latter part of his motion it would have spared him the latter part of his speech.

Mr. FOX adverted to the observations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer respecting questions which he considered himself bound to answer. The learned gentleman had put a question to him in very plain and distinct terms, not as to a Member of Parliament, but as to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and this he had refused to answer. And upon what day? Was this the day on which forms were to be opposed to substance? Was this the day in which public information was to be obstructed by points of etiquette, a day on which every regulation had been broken, and all laws had been violated? The right honourable gentleman excused himself by saying that he did not understand the question. He thought, for his own part, that it was distinctly enough stated; and if it was not, it was explained by the documents on the table. But the right honourable gentleman added, that he was not bound to answer a wild and extravagant question. Was it, however, a question deserving either of those epithets, the purpose of which was to ascertain, whether the public engaged to pay its creditors in money or in something else, which would virtually imply an act of national bankruptcy? He would not take upon him to say, whether silence on such an occasion was arrogant or not, but he should say that it did not shew a proper feeling of the state of the country, or a decent attention to the extreme anxiety of gentlemen in that House. As to the latter part of his speech the right honourable gentleman had certainly not attended to the motion, or he would not have delivered it. His honourable friend did not call upon the House to decide whether more assistance was to be granted to the Emperor. That deliberation upon which the right honourable gentleman insisted, it was the object of his honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan)

to procure a decision. The right honourable gentleman insisted, that they had concluded the reserve of cash to be made entirely for foreign services. They had concluded no such thing, for they had thrown no impediment in the way of reserve. Mr. Fox pressed the consideration, that perhaps, even at that moment, Ministers were sending money abroad, and all that he at present asked was inhibition upon them from such a conduct during this solemn pause, this *interregnum* of the laws. He contradicted the assertion that the exportation had not produced the present scarcity of specie, because it had been frequently severely felt before in the course of the war, when no alarm of invasion existed. And he was afraid that Ministers would not even yet be terrified out of that ruinous cause which they had been for some time pursuing. If there was any man who could lay his hand upon his breast and say, that he confided in their wisdom, with that man he had no dispute. For his own part he disclaimed all confidence and all dependance. He could not trust that the right honourable gentleman would not do what he had already done, and from which he had even claimed merit. When accused of sending money to the Emperor without consent of the House, in direct violation of the usages of Parliament and the principles of the Constitution, he came forward and boasted of his conduct; how could they be called upon for confidence, how could they trust on this very day that clandestine remittances were not made, and that the system which he had so strenuously defended would not be renewed? Was this a time when the public could believe that their representatives acted to them with fidelity, if they did not upon an occasion so critical as the present, discover a jealous anxiety for their interest, instead of an unreasonable confidence in Ministers? In supporting the motion of his honourable friend he did not conceive that he precipitately brought into discussion the subject which he had thought should be deferred till to-morrow, but he was for preventing the Minister from remitting any sums to the Emperor; contrary to law, indeed, yet a practice from which, on this account, however, he had not been deterred. There was but one point more to which he would say a single word without interfering with the discussion of to-morrow, for sufficient against the day was the evil thereof; but the right honourable gentleman said that the inquiry which he meant to propose was to be limited in its object. His opinion, however, was, that we had no chance of salvation, unless the House went into an ample inquiry into our general financial situation. They must not stop in the prosecution of their investigation by demands of confidence, for in their faithful and active discharge of this important task, the credit and the

existence of the country were involved. Unless every individual Member entered fully into the whole of the case, unless the Minister laid before them all the circumstances which had led to the crisis in which we were placed, they would betray their duty to the public, and become accessory to the certain and inevitable ruin which must otherwise follow.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS said, that he should not enter into the subject which was more properly reserved for discussion to-morrow. He could not help, however, remarking the different arguments used by the gentlemen on the other side to induce the House to accede to the motion. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) had said, that with him the declaration of the Bank, with regard to the solidity of their situation, would have greater weight than any declaration the House could make upon the subject. Nothing less, however, than a full and ample inquiry by the House into our financial situation could satisfy the mind of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox), or save the country. When he saw such differences of opinion upon the importance of inquiry between two gentlemen not disposed to disagree, he must be forgiven if he begged leave to differ from their conclusions. When his right honourable friend stated the propositions which were meant to be brought forward to-morrow, and when gentlemen stood up and asked all his opinions at present, what were to be his opinions to-morrow, or on any future occasion, surely these were neither questions which it was fit to ask, or which any Member of Parliament was bound to answer. The purpose of the present motion could only be to prevent His Majesty's Ministers from making any remittances to the Emperor between this and to-morrow. Surely, then, the necessity of pressing it now could not be very clear. The honourable gentleman, after the discussion of to-morrow, after he had received all the light which that would produce, might bring it forward, or even without any inconvenience arising in the mean time, on the following day. Without the information which the ensuing discussion would afford, the House was called upon to decide that the remittances to the Emperor were the cause of the present difficulties, while it would probably appear that it was quite on the other side. Such a resolution might produce a bad effect abroad, and might be considered as a determination of the House on the subject of withholding assistance from our ally the Emperor. He opposed the motion likewise on this ground, that it supposed a connection between the remittances of the Emperor, and the objects of discussion to-morrow, when in reality none existed.

Mr. W. MILNER said he felt great satisfaction in the motion

of his honourable friend, for he had come down to the House determined to move something to the same effect. It was the duty of the House to prevent Ministers from sending any money out of the kingdom, and to tie up their hands on this occasion. The situation of the country was truly serious and important. In consequence of the Bank not paying in cash, every country bank in which money was deposited, which now paid with notes instead of cash, had stopped payment, and broken the contract with those who entrusted them with money. In such circumstances as the present it was the duty of the House to be vigilant.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that the gentlemen on the other side, because they could not fairly meet, seemed determined not to understand his motion. In its nature it was perfectly distinct from the discussion of to-morrow. [Here Mr. Sheridan desired the concluding clause of the motion to be read]. To-morrow an inquiry was to be moved into the situation of the Bank. His object was merely to pledge the House to inquire into the circumstances which rendered that measure necessary before any remittances could be sent to the Emperor. The discussion of to-morrow was not stated to be for any such inquiry, and therefore he wished Ministers to be prevented from sending any money abroad till it was obtained. The right honourable Secretary said, that the circumstances on which the inquiry into the circumstances of the Bank was founded, were not at all connected with the remittances to the Emperor, and that it was quite on the other side: this was something strange indeed. He had never heard, however, that there had been any remittances from the Emperor to this country, if this was the meaning of its being quite on the other side, for the Emperor had never even yet fulfilled the engagements which this country had guaranteed; or, perhaps, the right honourable Secretary meant, that the more money was sent abroad, the more would remain at home. He was not a little surprised, too, to hear that the present motion should be construed to infer, that no more money was to be sent to the Emperor; strange, indeed, it was, that the right honourable gentleman should not understand the difference between deferring and refusing payment, when they had come forward with a proclamation, by which the Bank were authorized to refuse payment of their notes for a limited time. He therefore contended, that it was fit that Ministers, in the present circumstances, ought to be prevented from sending any money abroad, till Parliament had fully investigated the causes from which the distress arose.

The House then divided: For the Order of the Day, 247
Against it, 70. Majority against Mr. Sheridan's motion, 177.

While strangers were excluded from the gallery, a conversation took place upon the farther consideration of the report of the Poor's Bill.

Mr. JOLLIFFE thought the bill so defective and objectionable, that he was of opinion it ought to be wholly laid aside.

Mr. WHITBREAD said, that when the right honourable gentleman had said upon the motion which he had the honour to bring forward last year upon the state of the poor, that every deviation from the act of Queen Elizabeth had tended to corrupt the original purity of the Poor Laws, he had expected that the bill of the right honourable gentleman, instead of the complicated machinery which it contained, would have endeavoured to simplify the system. In this respect, however, he had been greatly disappointed; and he hinted at the impossibility of executing some parts of its clauses.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that it would require a long discussion to show that the bill was founded upon the principles he had held out in his speech last year. If the bill was not in a state so advanced for discussion, he hoped the House would impute it to the very important public business which had prevented him from bestowing upon this subject all the attention he wished. He did not mean to press it for discussion till time was given for gentlemen to make up their minds upon it; and though he should be sorry for any delay, he thought it better to postpone the measure than to pass it without consideration.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that he had paid great attention to the present bill, and he must say, that a worse bill he had never seen. Its principle was detestable. It was a libel on the rich, and a libel on the industry of the country. He wished with the honourable gentleman, Mr. Jolliffe, that the bill were entirely given up. He wished, if it was to be still kept up, that a day should be set aside for the discussion of it, that it might be thrown out at once, and he had no doubt but he should be able to convince some gentlemen that its principle was so foul, that it could not be entertained by the House for a single moment.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that after this he should be sorry if a day was not set apart for the discussion of this subject. It would be better, however, to discuss it when explained by the schedules. Some day next week, or the week following, at a moderate distance, might be fixed for this purpose.

Mr. VANSITTART thought that the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to employ the leisure of Summer to fill up the schedules.

Sir WILLIAM GEARY said, that there was a part of the

principle of the bill which, in the present circumstances, could not be put in execution. The overseers were to be authorized to borrow money in order to carry some of the provisions into effect, which would thus be rendered unavailing.

The farther consideration of the report was put off till Thursday se'nnight.

The report of the bill for increasing the capital of the East-India Company was brought up and agreed to.

Mr. WHITBREAD said, that when he had last given notice of his motion, for an inquiry into the conduct of Administration, relative to the late attempt against Ireland, he had thought that nothing more important could engage the attention of the House, till the awful events of this day had fatally proved he was wrong. It now appeared that all the blunders and the disasters with which the conduct of the war had been marked, were nothing in comparison with the consequences which they now threatened. He should therefore consider himself highly blameable if he took up any of the interval for consideration that occurred before the momentous discussion of to-morrow; he exculpated himself from any disrespect to the House in these delays; last Friday he was prepared, and the motion was postponed at the request of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the importance of to-morrow's discussion would be an apology for the present delay. He intended, however, to bring on the motion next Friday.

Tuesday, 28th February.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved the order of the day for taking into consideration His Majesty's message.

The message was accordingly read by the Speaker.

Mr. Chancellor PITT. Sir, I gave notice yesterday that I should first move an address to His Majesty, returning him thanks for his most gracious communication, and assuring him that the House would immediately proceed to take into consideration the object recommended in the message to their serious attention. I stated that my next motion would be for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the amount of the outstanding engagements of the Bank, and the means they had of making good their engagements. As with respect to my first motion, for expressing our thanks to His Majesty, and assuring him of our readiness to take immediate steps to comply with his recommendation, there can scarcely be supposed to take place any difference of opinion. I will not, in prefacing that motion, detain the House any longer, but

content myself with moving, That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, &c.

The question being put upon the address in the usual form, it was carried *nem. con.*

The Chancellor of the Exchequer then proceeded. I suggested that it was also my intention this day to submit to the House a motion, "That there should be appointed a Select Committee to make such inquiry into the state of the Bank as might be conceived to be necessary, and to collect such information, with respect to the circumstances of the time, as might be sufficient to point out the necessity of the measure adopted by the Bank in consequence of an Order of Council, and at the same time justifying the Members of that House in taking the proper steps to confirm and enforce that measure." With respect to the first step to be considered, the state of the Bank, that already has, in a great measure, been ascertained by the confidence of public opinion. Of this public opinion the most unequivocal and satisfactory proofs have been afforded, even within the short space that has elapsed since the minute of Council has been issued. It has been clearly evinced that there is no doubt entertained with respect to the solidity of the Bank to answer all the demands of its creditors. At this trying period, that called for the exertion of the good sense and the fortitude of Englishmen, their good sense, and their fortitude have been displayed in a way equally creditable to themselves, and auspicious to the public welfare. But though there can be no hesitation with respect to the solidity of the Bank, undoubtedly at so important a period, and under those critical circumstances which now require the interference of the House, it is incumbent upon them to take the proper means to satisfy themselves, that the measure which has been adopted in consequence of the opinion of Council, was occasioned by unavoidable emergency, and had become indispensably necessary. It is the more incumbent upon them to institute this inquiry, and to obtain the fullest conviction on this head, as it is proposed that Parliament should now be called upon to confirm that opinion, and to sanction the measure by an act of the Legislature. I am, indeed, confident that the result of the investigation will be such, as not only to leave no doubt that the security of the Bank is as unquestionable, as it is unquestioned, but will completely establish the propriety of adding the public security to the security and property of the Bank. With respect to the amount of the outstanding demands on the Banks, and the means which they possess for discharging their obligations, I am satisfied that the inquiry will be comprised in a short compass; and that from the result of a very short investigation, the advantage of the

measure already adopted. will appear so obvious, as to lay the natural foundation of every farther proceeding on the part of this House. It is proposed that the public security should be given, not only for the outstanding claims on the Bank which exist at the present moment; but also for those additional issues of paper which may be deemed advisable. There is, however, one point, which from the novelty and importance of the conjuncture, it is necessary should be well understood. As to the degree of satisfaction proper to be obtained with respect to the grounds of necessity on which the measure has been adopted, it must appear to every reflecting man that this is a subject of inquiry of so critical and delicate a nature, that it cannot, consistently with public safety, be pushed to too great particularity or minuteness of detail. It cannot be doubtful to any man acquainted with the subject, that it would be highly improper for the Committee to enter into a minute and particular inquiry into the precise state of the different descriptions of specie belonging to the Bank, to proceed to a dissection of their accounts, and to state the balance of cash. These were circumstances that could not be disclosed without great imprudence, and the risque of permanent inconvenience. It must be evident that the inquiry ought to be conducted in the most discreet manner, consistently with the object of procuring the information necessary for the satisfaction of the House. It must be felt, that so novel a measure would not, in the first instance, have been adopted without a strong conviction of its necessity. It will be proper, then, that the business be confided to a Secret Committee, and that they be expressly instructed by the House not to push their inquiries too minutely into the particulars I have suggested, but to confine their investigation to such circumstances of the general state of the Bank, as may be sufficient for the purpose in view. My object, therefore, is, to move for the appointment of a Committee to ascertain the general state of the funds and obligations of the Bank, to examine into the grounds of the necessity of the measure already adopted, and to suggest what farther measures ought to be taken by Parliament in pursuance of the minute of Council. It is not for me to point out in what manner the Members of that Committee ought to exercise the important trust confided to them by the House: but if it should be proved by the evidence of the Members of the Bank Direction that the extent of the late demands upon the Bank, and the rapidity with which they were brought forward, were likely to occasion such a pressure as not to leave a sufficient fund for the public service, and that their opinion, in this respect, entirely coincide with the opinion of His Majesty's Ministers; a strong argument will surely, then, be af-

forded that the measure, which the necessity of the times required on the part of the Executive Administration, it is incumbent on the Legislature to confirm and enforce. This is the only point on which the Committee are called upon to inquire, or which it can be important for them to establish; and in pursuing this object of investigation, they are by no means called to push their inquiries into circumstances, the disclosure of which would be attended with temporary injury to the credit of the country, and with permanent embarrassment to the operations of the Bank. On those grounds I am desirous to rest the motion, which I shall now submit to the House. The motion is to the following effect; "That a Secret Committee be appointed to ascertain the total amount of the out-standing demands on the Bank of England, and likewise of the Funds for discharging the same; and that they do also report their opinion of the necessity of providing for the confirmation and continuance of the measures taken in pursuance of the minute of Council on the 26th instant."

The motion being read,

Mr. FOX rose, and addressed the House nearly to the following substance—Sir, when I consider the wonderful event, which has this night been announced to the House for a second time; when I take into review the causes which have led to this extraordinary situation of affairs, and the effects likely to result from it; I confess that after the pause which has been afforded me for deliberation, I do not at all feel more sanguinely or more agreeably, than I did on the first mention of the subject. The right honourable gentleman has moved for the appointment of a Committee for the purpose of inquiry, to which, if it was vested with powers sufficiently ample, I certainly should not object. But it might have been expected, and I for one did expect, that the Minister, who had conducted affairs in such a manner as to call for the measure that has now been proposed, would not have been contented to pass so slightly over the nature of the crisis; but would have thought it incumbent on him at least, to give some general statement of those circumstances which have led to that situation of unparalleled and unprecedented embarrassment, in which we are now placed. Let us consider a little how he has proceeded, even in the first stage of the business. Every man, who read the Proclamation of Council, must have been struck with the reflection that this was the first time a measure had been adopted by the Executive Government in this country to prevent the Bank from answering the demands of its lawful creditors. The effect of the measure I will not describe by saying that it was impaired—for that is but a weak word on such

an occasion—I contend that it has destroyed the credit of the Bank. There is no gentleman so ignorant of the principles of paper credit, as not to know that the whole source of the validity of this species of currency is derived from the circumstance of its being convertible into gold and silver. But when we learn that Ministers have in the present instance not merely recommended to the Bank to suspend all payments in specie, but have positively required them to adopt this measure, we in this country must consider ourselves as placed in a very different situation with respect to the future state of paper credit. If the thing itself was necessary from the circumstances of the time, still I do not approve of the mode in which it has been carried into execution. If the measure was indispensably required from the pressing exigency of the country, and the imperious consideration of public safety, an act of Parliament was surely the only proper mode of effecting the purpose. If the plea of urgency be brought forward, and the necessity of adopting the measure without delay, these were considerations on which the House were competent to decide, and which must have impelled them, as in other cases, to lose no time in carrying a bill through the different stages. This House was that particular branch of the Legislature, which it was of the most essential importance should be consulted on such an occasion. The neglect that has taken place in this instance is of the most mischievous example, and may be attended with the most fatal consequences at a future period. All those who have turned their attention to the paper credit of this country, must view with alarm for years and centuries to come, that the King or Executive Government have by the present measure claimed a power to annihilate by one breath all the property of the creditors of the Bank. It may be said that such a power would be equally dangerous in any branch of the Legislature. But surely the danger is greater from the quarter in which it has now been exercised. It has been found that wherever a power of this nature has been confided to a Senate, or to a large body of men, it has been better preserved, and has presented fewer instances of abuse, than in those situations where the reverse has been the case. This conclusion is supported by the recorded facts of history, and the uniform testimony of experience. It has been proved that the stability of credit has always been better maintained in Republics, than in those Governments where it merely depended on an individual, or on a small body of men. Of all modes then by which the object could have been effected, the measure that has actually been adopted is the most pernicious in its principle, and the most dangerous in its consequences. It will not be easily erased from the memories of men, or from the annals of the

country, that whatever may be the wanted theory of our Constitution, whatever the nominal value of our rights; whatever the pretended security of our laws; one word from the King may have the effect to destroy one half of the property of the country. The Proclamation of the Council merely forbids the issuing of money; the paper however, subsequently published from the Bank, removes all doubts with respect to the nature and extent of the measure, and thanks are undoubtedly due to the Directory, for the explicitness they have manifested on the occasion. After expressing their intention to comply with the order of Council, they proceed to point out the objects which the measure has in view. They declare that they will continue their discounts to the merchants in paper, and that they will also pay in paper the dividend warrants*, Gentlemen may ascribe to affectation, when I declare that I feel nervous in stating the probable effect of this proceeding—and the more so, as I observed that the right honourable gentleman, who has certainly more cause than myself to take a fearful interest in the issue of this transaction, seemed to experience a similar feeling to so great a degree, that he was unable to use his splendid abilities to afford to the House any satisfactory explanation of its objects and effects. What, I ask, is the meaning of this measure? Though it has been declared by repeated laws, that faith is most solemnly to be kept with the public creditors, though you honourably declare that you will impose no tax on the interest they hold in the stocks; you now so strongly feel the pressing exigencies of your situation, that you are compelled to overlook the covenants of law, and the obligations of honour, and to apply for a resource to the great depot of national wealth. But it may be said that the dividends are still to be paid in paper. Is there, however, any gentleman so ignorant as to conceive there is any difference between refusing to pay the di-

* *The following is the Advertisement from the Bank, alluded to by Mr. Fox;*

“ BANK of ENGLAND, Feb. 27, 1797.

“ In consequence of an Order of His Majesty's Privy Council, notified to the BANK last night, a copy of which is hereunto annexed, the Governor, Deputy Governor, and Directors of the Bank of England, think it their duty to inform the Proprietors of Bank Stock, as well as the Public at large, that the general concerns of the Bank are in the most affluent and prosperous situation, and such as to preclude every doubt as to the security of its Notes. The Directors mean to continue their usual discounts for the accommodation of the Commercial Interest, paying the amount in Bank Notes, and the Dividend Warrants will be paid in the same manner.

“ FRANCIS MARTIN, Secretary.”

vidends in specie, and refusing to pay them altogether? Are not the terms of the contract, "That they shall be paid in bank notes, or in pounds sterling, and current coin of the kingdom?" With what pretence can you affirm that you do not tax the income of the stock-holder, if you break the terms of the contract, and compel him to take for his interest a compensation of less value than that which has been stipulated by solemn engagement? Does any man believe that he would receive at the present moment in the city a thousand pounds in cash for a thousand pounds in notes? You admit then that you are come to such a state of desperate exigency, that it becomes necessary to violate all contracts. Supposing that the dividends were confided to Ministers to pay the expences of the army or navy, and that they gave to the holders certain paper on Government security, would they be placed in the same situation as before with respect to the stability of public credit? So far as regarded the principle, Ministers might as well at once confiscate their property for the use of the state. But it has been said that occasions will happen, that emergencies will arise, which render it necessary to break through all ordinary restraint. Unquestionably necessity furnishes that strong argument, to which no reason can be opposed; but it ought to be proved that the necessity was indeed most absolute and strictly designed, that the case of emergency was of the most pressing nature, and capable of being most clearly demonstrated, that should be brought to justify the measure of violating the national faith, and invading the property of the public creditor. That Minister who came down and endeavoured to prove to the House, that necessity had compelled him to this fatal and irremediable act of bankruptcy, ought at least to be prepared to shew that the necessity had been occasioned by no fault of his own, and that the most rigid oeconomy had prevailed in every department of Administration. No doubt there have been precedents for various abuses under which Ministers sometimes found it convenient to shelter their misconduct; but there was this particularity in the present case, that it was entirely without any precedent in the history of the country. If this unheard-of calamity has then occurred for the first time during this Administration, it was incumbent on those at the head of affairs to shew that the necessary means of foresight and wisdom have been employed to obviate the danger. Nothing of this sort has been attempted; we have only the assertion of the right honourable gentleman of the strong conviction he felt of the necessity of the measure, and it is incumbent on the House to determine whether they ought to be satisfied on the authority of his bare assertion that the danger has been fully proved, and that it

could by no precaution have possibly been prevented. If we are to be satisfied on such authority, if we are to conceive an assertion a sufficient ground of confidence, what account shall we be able to give to our constituents of this new disaster that has befallen the country? Amidst all the calamities and disgraces of former periods, many of which have been sufficiently severe and humiliating, we had still one ground of consolation in the sanctity of national credit. Every Minister might say to Parliament, and every Member to his constituents, even at the most afflicting æras, "The public faith has been preserved." The inviolability of the principle sanctioned its future observance. But now we are even deprived of this last source of public consolation, this last prop of national honour. With the feelings naturally impressed upon me by these reflections, I yesterday came down to the House. I must own that I did not then like some words that fell from the Minister with respect to the minute of Council. A motion for inquiry is brought forward. The minute evidently threw some slur on the Bank, and as a proof that they felt so, the Directors immediately published a paper which contained an assurance of the affluent and prosperous situation of their affairs. Under these circumstances, it was natural and laudable that they should feel an anxiety for that inquiry, which was necessary to vindicate their own credit. Another reason assigned for the inquiry is, that the public are to be called upon to guarantee the security of the bank notes. On the first suggestion, I did not see any thing objectionable in granting this guarantee. As I have since, however, altered my opinion, it may be proper for me to say a few words on the subject. Every sanction given by the public to the credit of individuals, though for a time it may be attended with some advantage, will ultimately be found to be injurious and destructive. If the credit of the Bank rests on that footing of solidity which has been asserted, it is better that it should still remain on the same foundation. The right honourable gentleman, however, thinks that even with the favourable opinion which is now entertained by the public of the credit of the Bank, there would still be some advantage derived from the guarantee of the Government. It is curious to hear from the right honourable gentleman this theory with respect to the advantages of guarantee. Happy would it have been for the country if he had not in former instances extended this system of guarantee to foreign powers. Without paying any compliment to the Bank of England, I think its credit fully as good as that of the Bank of Vienna. Without instituting any particular inquiry, I think we might as safely guarantee its security, as the security of some German Princes, with respect to whom

we have no means to ascertain either the obligations to which they are liable, or the funds which they possess to discharge them, and of whose good faith we are entirely ignorant. If I think that the Committee would be empowered to go into all the causes which have led to this disastrous state of affairs, and into all the circumstances connected with the transaction, I certainly should not desire that the inquiry should be placed on a more extensive scale. The right honourable gentleman has, however, intimated that it is not his intention that the inquiry should be conducted in this manner. He has stated that there are some points of peculiar delicacy connected with an investigation of the state of the Bank, and the disclosure of which would create great embarrassment. There is one distinction, however, to which it is material to attend. While the credit of a corporation is entire, the public have no right to pry into their secrets ; nor is it fitting that they should be made matter of investigation ; but when once a failure has taken place, or a slur has been thrown upon its character, the best remedy for this unpleasant situation of its affairs, is to bring them into a state of the utmost publicity, if, indeed, they are such as can bear the test of a fair scrutiny. When we hear, in the present instance, of some points of great delicacy, we must view them in comparison with those points of still greater delicacy which attach to this subject : and in this light what exposure of the affairs of the Bank can possibly involve considerations of greater delicacy than a measure which goes to the extent of violating the national faith, and invading the property of the public creditors ? The House are called to decide upon the merits of the whole transaction. To assist them in forming their judgement, it was necessary that all the concerns of the Bank should be investigated. They ought to be enabled to pronounce how far the measure had been dictated by motives of imperious and inevitable necessity : every circumstance which had been made known to the Chancellor of the Exchequer respecting the situation of the Bank, ought also to be made known to the Committee ; all the grounds on which he had been induced to publish the Proclamation of Council, ought to be laid before them ; it was only from such full information that they could be enabled correctly to judge of the guilt, innocence, or merit of the conduct pursued on the occasion. The nature of the case was such as more immediately to demand the most particular investigation. For though there were eight Members of the Cabinet present at the Council from which the minute was issued, it was to be remarked that the responsibility chiefly attached to one individual—the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Upon the representation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the unusual demand

for specie, and the danger of a scarcity of that article for the purposes of the public service, the measure was adopted. Let me beg of you not to imitate the blind confidence of the Lords of the Council, and to bestow your approbation on the mere representation of the necessity of the measure, but to have before you all the facts and arguments connected with the transaction, and to draw your conclusion from the result of a full and impartial investigation. Without these it is impossible that you can fairly absolve him from the imputation of the most gross misconduct. And under the present circumstances I feel it to be my duty to consider the Chancellor of the Exchequer as having violated the law of the land, and given a dangerous blow to the national credit. The necessity of the case must, indeed, be well ascertained before his conduct can be justified. It must be proved how far he had the means of knowing the danger that threatened the public service, and how far his information was of that serious and alarming nature to demand so extraordinary a precaution.

After all the blunders and calamities of his former administration, after the adoption of a step so pregnant with the most fatal mischief, it is impossible that in this instance, consistently with that duty which we owe to ourselves and our constituents, we can repose in him any confidence as having acted wisely and beneficially, without having before us the documents upon which his conduct was founded. If from the inspection of these it appears that some extraordinary measure was necessary for the safety of the country, we ought also to be satisfied that this was the least violent measure by which the object could have been effected. We ought, then, to review the whole state of the finances, and to examine how far the Minister has done every thing in his power to avert the ruin by which they are now menaced, or, on the contrary, whether he has not been instrumental, by his profuse and impolitic measures, to bring them into that state of alarming embarrassment in which they are now placed. But as an answer to all this, we are presented with one short summary criterion: the Minister tells us, that he would not have taken the measure without feeling the strongest conviction of its necessity. He insinuates that the same conviction was experienced by the Bank Directors. Of the excellent conduct of the Bank of England, I have not the least doubt; that many circumstances in that conduct are highly meritorious, I do not deny; still less should I think of denying that to the excellent conduct of Administration, from time to time, since the Revolution, upon the subject of preserving faith with the public creditor, much of the prosperity of this country is owing. But am I, therefore,

because they chuse to ask for it, to accede to measures that are wholly without a precedent, and that without understanding that there is to be a full inquiry into all the conduct of those who, in my opinion, have brought our affairs into their present condition? I, therefore, say, that if the House of Commons should allow this Committee to be appointed, they will most scandalously abandon their duty, if they confine their inquiry to what the Chancellor of the Exchequer has this night stated. If the Committee shall inquire into the state of the outstanding engagements of the Bank, and what are their funds for providing for them, and shall stop there, I say they will shamefully abandon their duty. They must not be content with any measure, merely because in the opinion of the Minister it is right; no, nor even upon finding that, in the opinion of the Directors of the Bank, that it is right. It is your duty to examine the grounds upon which these opinions are formed, and finally to form an opinion of your own. If ever there was a question in which confidence in Ministers, of which I have so frequently so much heard, should be placed out of view together, it is this very case. If the most ingenious man in this House, or in this country, was called upon to invent a case in which confidence should be put out of view, this is the very case, which, I think, he would suggest. Shew me a case in the whole history of this country in which it has appeared more peculiarly the duty of this House to withhold confidence in the King's Ministers than that which is now before you; or one, in which if you do exercise confidence, instead of instituting, it can be possible for a House of Commons to be more deserving of the execration of the People. Let us look at the case, and see what sort of a thing it is. Is it a case of treaty upon peace or war? Is it a case of negotiation? No; it is a case of finance, and finance merely—a subject which at all times has belonged, and belonged almost exclusively, to this House—a subject which, from its nature, is best considered in a public assembly. Next, let us examine what time, and under what circumstances, we are considering the subject? In December, 1795, the Minister required for the funding of the navy debt, &c. two millions, which, he said, would be sufficient to prevent the discount from rising. It was granted. In the May following he required four millions more. It was granted. In the December following he required seven millions and upwards for the same purpose. Can we forget that, at each time, he said, that what he required would be amply sufficient for the purpose? Can we forget what he assured us upon the probable effect of the last loan, and on which, if report speaks truly, there are circumstances that are highly discreditable to

his conjectures upon that subject? All these circumstances I take notice of, merely to shew that the Minister's conjectures, on matters of finance, have been such as to afford us no rational hopes of seeing his future speculations verified; and therefore, I say, that confidence in him must, on the part of this House, be a blind one. Will the Minister himself get up this night in this House and say, that Administration are, on the face of things, exculpated for every thing that has lately happened to the financial concerns of this country? Will he say, that they have been punctual in the discharge of their duty upon that subject, and that it is not owing to them that we are in the deplorable condition of which the question now before you gives to the world at large so striking, so lamentable a proof? Is it not notorious that the prizes of the last Lottery were delayed in payment for a considerable time? Has not the public creditor thereby suffered? Has not the public credit of the nation been thereby diminished? Have not bills on Government been presented, and have not the holders been plainly told that they must wait for a considerable time, and have they not been obliged so to wait? Most unquestionably they have! And the reason assigned for all this delay in payment, has been fashionably called, the want of a sufficient circulating medium, but which, in truth, only proved our insolvency, and the inability of the Minister to fulfil the promises which he so readily held forth. All his new schemes on finance have only contributed to bring on the evil which he has from time to time pretended to remove. Is it not notorious that he has rejected all the advice that has been given to him from time to time? He pretended to do away all the evils that arose from the increase of our unfunded debt, evils which we all felt, and for which certainly a remedy was necessary. But what was the effect of his pretended remedy, and what has been the result of his conduct since he pretended to provide against the mischief? Why, that he has so miscalculated the wants of Government, or from time to time so mistated them, that he has been obliged to provide for the sum of twelve millions, after assuring us that no farther money would be wanted for the funding of the navy debt; and after all these assurances from time to time, that he was making ample provision, the navy bills at this very time were at a higher discount than they were at any former period. I come now to another point. The Directors of the Bank often told the Minister what the effect would be of his sending such vast sums of money abroad. They remonstrated against such conduct. I will not enter upon the detail of the advice that was given to him at these times; but we all know, and now feel the effect of his conduct; for he sent money

abroad, not only against the opinion, and in defiance of the remonstrance of the Bank, but against the known spirit, and palpably against the very letter of the Constitution. Such has been the conduct of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and I do say, we are now called upon, by the duty which we owe to the public, to give no farther credit to that Minister for his statements in any public affair of finance, the more especially upon the subject which is now before us. It is a subject on which this House ought not to place confidence in any Minister, because it is a subject which we ought most scrupulously to examine for ourselves. If the best Minister that ever managed the affairs of this country were to ask for confidence in such a case as this, it would be the duty of this House to withhold it. If his father, in the course of the seven years war, when his measures led to the most brilliant victories, when he was covered with all his glory, had come to the House of Commons to demand such confidence as the Minister seems to ask by the speech which introduced the motion which is now before you, I believe, that notwithstanding all the esteem which that illustrious Statesman deservedly enjoyed, *that* Parliament would have had virtue enough to refuse it to him; but he was much too wise, he had too much regard for the constitutional privileges of this House, to ask for such a confidence. But what would have been denied to the virtue, the wisdom, the eloquence, the glory of that Minister, had he asked it, is now, I fear, to be given to a Minister who has disgraced himself, and ruined his country. The House, if it means to have any credit with the People of this country, must not confide in any man, but must examine public affairs, must control the executive power, must institute an inquiry, a careful and minute inquiry, into all the circumstances that have led to the calamitous condition in which we are now placed. We must take care that the man who has brought us into this deplorable state shall not be permitted totally to ruin us. If we do not do so, the most candid manner in which we can act towards the public is, to declare at once that we are persuaded the care of this country is grown above the cognizance of the House of Commons, and that we chuse to give it up entirely to the direction of the King's Ministers; in which case we shall plead guilty to all the charges that have been exhibited out of doors against us; that we are not the Representatives of the People of England, but the Servants of the Minister of the Crown; that it is true, indeed, the theory of the Constitution of England is beautiful, but that its practical utility is at an end, as far as regards the functions of the House of Commons, for that now they implicitly commit to the Minister of the Crown all control over subjects of finance. Let

me ask, if this will and must not be the inevitable conclusion of the People of this country, if you do not enter upon a full inquiry upon this subject? Let me ask, if this be not a case for inquiry, what case can possibly be called so? Let me ask, what case can be more violent, and less warrantable by law, than the present? Let me ask, if ever since the Revolution there was proposed a measure more fraught with danger to the credit of this country? Let me ask, if any Minister ever existed who had less claim to confidence, and whose conduct called more for the jealousy of this House than the present Minister? If, after you have turned these questions in your minds, and have agreed, as I know you do, what answer ought to be given to them all, you still confide in the present Minister, I will then say you will deserve every thing that has been said against you, for you will, indeed, be a House of Commons that has surrendered all its functions to the will of the Minister of the Crown.

There has been a custom, I confess a very laudable one, to speak well of the navy. It certainly is a service to which the people of this country are prodigiously indebted, and we cannot have too much tenderness for the character of our naval officers, and yet we find it to be the uniform practice of this country to call to a court martial every officer who has been unsuccessful to a certain extent, however meritorious his conduct may have been. Now let me ask, if this be the case with regard to our favourite service, what should be the conduct of this House when the Minister of the Crown openly and confessedly has been guilty of mismanagement in an alarming degree? What should be the conduct of this House when a Minister issues a proclamation in the name of the Privy Council to destroy the public credit of this country? Let me ask what should be the conduct of a House of Commons towards him who is at least *prima facie* a culprit before them and the public? Who is certainly in the situation of an accused person? I think it is not difficult to answer these questions. If there are any who hear me who think that I say this from personal rivalry, they are welcome to charge me with it; but they do not know my nature; those who do, will bring no such charge against me. If, however, to charge a criminal Minister, in order that an inquiry may be made into his conduct, be a crime, then I shall be content to be called a great criminal. Let me ask, What is the credit of this nation, if a proclamation, dictated by a Minister, is to set aside the provisions of solemn acts of Parliament? Long, long experience has taught us, or should have taught us, that punctuality and good faith are the foundations of credit; that credit can have no existence inde-

pendent of good faith. It has been said; more than once, that we are to trust to providence in our affairs. It would be a miracle which I have never yet heard that providence has preformed towards man to give credit to those who have no faith. On the 27th of February, 1797, for the first time since the Revolution, an act was done in the King's name which has struck at the foundation of the public credit of the country, by seizing the public money belonging to individuals, deposited in the public treasury of the public creditor; and afterwards withholding and refusing payment of that money. What can now restore the public credit? Will any man say he knows the remedy for this? If it shall appear that Ministers have acted prudently, according to the pressure of the case; that they acted wisely; that they have acted economically; that they looked forward to all the consequences, as far as human prudence could foresee — then I am willing to allow there is no man can blame them, however calamitous our condition may be. If they can shew, contrary to the *prima facie* evidence of the case, that they have not been to blame, they must be absolved; but that is no reason why we should not have a full inquiry into the matter; on the contrary, it is a very strong reason for such inquiry; and they themselves are deeply interested in having it instituted. But if it should appear that this crisis has not been brought on without guilt on their part, it must be absolutely for the credit of the public that the truth of the matter should be made manifest to the world. If you shun this inquiry, what will be the consequence? I will suppose for a moment, for the sake of the argument, that the whole of this measure is the result of inevitable necessity. I wish, then, to know what the public creditor is to think? He will deliberate thus: That although in the year 1797 the Minister struck unavoidably at the public credit, yet what happened in the House of Commons? That in pursuance of a full inquiry it was found to be an act of inevitable necessity, and could not have happened under any other plea? No; it passed upon the assertion of the Minister that it was an act of necessity, and there was no inquiry; therefore some future Minister may be wicked, although the present one is virtuous, and may take this as a precedent, and call that an inevitable necessity, which, in truth, will be only an act of convenience to him, and under that pretext appropriate the property of the public creditor to the use of Government; so that without a full inquiry into this matter, you can never restore confidence to the public creditor. On the other hand, if this is the result of the misconduct of the Minister, you should declare it to be so, and by the punishment of the delinquent shew the public you take care

of their affairs. — These are the only two ways in which you can restore the confidence of the public creditor.

Let us now see what has been the conduct of the present Minister in the course of this war upon the subject of finance. Have any three months passed in which he has not produced some new expedient? And have they not every one of them, without a single exception, proved erroneous? But this, compared to other things, is, comparatively, nothing. Good God, Sir, let us look at the situation of this country! Year after year he has been amusing us with his ideas of the finances of France—now on the verge, now in the gulph of bankruptcy—what computations upon their *assignats* and their *mandats*. They could not possibly continue—all perfectly true; but the misfortune is, that while he was thus amusing us, he has led us to the very same verge, aye, into the very same gulph; while he thus declaimed against the finances of France, and predicted truly as to the issue of those expedients, he fell miserably short of his conclusion that these considerations would put an end to the energy of the French. Their rash expedients have not put an end to their energy; and, perhaps, these rash expedients will not make us a prey to a foreign invader. But are we to follow their expedients on that account? By no means—we are not in the same relative situation with regard to the rest of the world. We depend more upon our commercial credit than they can do; the Minister has conducted the war upon the hope, that we should be able to defeat the French by a contest of finance; and you now see the expedients to which we are driven, by which we have destroyed the whole of our paper credit. I am aware that I may be answered, that I propose my *panacea*; an inquiry—I plead guilty to that charge—but my *panacea* has never been tried; the Minister's opposition to it has been tried repeatedly; namely, confidence in him. The public have seen the effect of that opposition; all I ask is, that my remedy may be tried; it can never be worse than his. We have for a long time had a confiding House of Commons; I want now an inquiring House of Commons; I say, that with a diligent, inquiring House of Commons, even although it should be an indifferent one with regard to talents, and with a Minister of very ordinary capacity, we shall be able to do more for the service of the people of this country, than an House of Commons composed of the best talents that ever adorned any Senate, and a Minister of the first abilities would be able to, if that House should implicitly confide in that Minister. If, therefore, I have, in an uniform tone, called for inquiry, and the House has been as persevering, as certainly it hitherto has in confiding, it is not wonderful that we are in our

present condition. I say, that without inquiry into the cause of our calamities, the public neither will, nor ought to be satisfied. I say farther, that the House ought, for the sake of its credit with the public, to enter into a full inquiry upon this matter, for the authority of an inquiring is much greater than that of a confiding House of Commons.

In the course of what I have said I have abstained from much observation upon what I think will be the effect of the measure that is now before us. I think that in many parts of the measure it is impossible to conceive any thing that will be more mischievous to this country. I cannot put any thing in competition with the danger of refusing to pay the public creditor; the breach of faith is to me more alarming than any thing that I have been able to present to my mind. "The exigency of the public service" is the phrase which is made use of. I am ready, however, to allow that I have altered my opinion since yesterday upon part of this subject, and I now declare, that I do not think any other measure so dangerous as this appears to be. It may be said that paying the army in depreciated paper would be a great and dangerous evil. I am ready to admit it would be a great and a dangerous evil; but I think upon mature reflection, that that evil, great as it would be, would not be equal to this, because the effect of it is not likely to be so lasting. I think that by this measure we shall be on the very verge, aye, even in the gulph of ruin. I did not think that, even under the measures of the present Administration, our total ruin was become so near. It is our duty, if possible, to retrieve our affairs; but if you persist in confiding in the Minister, our ruin is inevitable.

Mr. HOBHOUSE said, that when information was received that this measure was to be adopted, all the bankers were struck with consternation. They did not know whether they would be able to keep open their shops. He trembled for the consequences. Bank paper must necessarily fall into discredit. He really feared it would fall into as low a condition as even *assignats* and *mandats*. All the assurances of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would never beat down this plain dictate of common sense, that by his conduct the Bank had been compelled to commit an act of insolvency, by refusing specie for its paper.

It was the duty of the House not to rely upon the assurances of the right honourable gentleman, that the Bank was capable of fulfilling its engagements, but investigate the causes of its inefficiency to supply the demands upon it, before it undertook to guarantee its payments. At present its causes were enveloped in darkness; and

they had scarcely any better idea of the necessity of the measures recommended, than that the people were in dread of an invasion, and had buried their money in the earth. He suspected, however, that more money had been buried in Germany than in the ground, and believed that to be the true and principal cause of the embarrassment.

It appeared to him that the appointment of a Committee, such as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had moved for, would answer no good purpose without a full and complete inquiry into all the circumstances that have led us to this dreadful situation. Such a Committee as was here proposed, he was persuaded would be nugatory, and therefore this proposition should have his negative.

Mr. MARTIN said, that on a subject of so much delicacy as this was, he did not wish to trouble the House with many observations. He could not help, however, taking notice that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had proposed an inquiry, which in its nature must be a partial one. Now a superficial or partial inquiry into a question of accounts, for so this was, appeared to him to be an absurdity upon the face of it, and therefore he could not vote for it. He was ready, however, to agree to any measure that appeared to him to have a rational tendency to support public credit.

Sir JOHN SINCLAIR said, that the only way which appeared to him to be rational in judging what ought to be done in future, was to look at what had been done in former times, for which purpose he should desire an entry on the Journals to be read before he presumed to trouble the House with any opinion upon it. The case which he referred to, was the plan adopted by Parliament for restoring public credit in 1696, when the Bank struggled under similar embarrassments. Sir Charles Montague was the Chancellor of the Exchequer at that period, and author of the plan of relief; and under his prompt and vigorous direction, the affairs of the Bank quickly regained their former stability. A Committee was at that time appointed to inspect the accounts of the Bank, the number and extent of its outstanding engagements, the amount and value of its securities, the causes of its embarrassments, and the most speedy and effectual measures to surmount them. Sir John Bowles brought up the Report of the Committee, which publicly detailed the various debit and credit accounts, by which it was evident that the Bank was in possession of more than sufficient property to justify every demand, provided the temporary pressure for cash could be obviated. In consequence of the good effects of this precedent, Sir John Sinclair could not help agreeing with the right honourable gentleman near him (Mr. Fox), that it would be proper

to pursue the steps of that Committee, by inquiring not only into the amount of the outstanding engagements of the Bank, but into the amount of the property also, and making a public report thereof. Having the advantage of the precedent which he referred to, which from his silence he suspected his right honourable friend (Mr. Pitt) had not, he felt the necessity of extending the measure of inquiry. We should know all the circumstances that led to that calamity which we now feel. He hoped we should not adopt any measure by which the character and prosperity of this country should be injured. There was a consideration that appeared to him to be of great importance to our welfare, namely, that the people of this country should be well assured of the pure spirit and independence of their representatives in Parliament. He was confident that this subject had not hitherto been viewed in that important manner to which it was entitled. He had learnt from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it was the intention of Government that the notes of the Bank of England should be received from individuals to the public; upon which there was one observation which appeared to him to be extremely necessary. While the notes of the Bank continue in credit, they may be received by the public from the individual, and the revenue will not suffer; but if they should fall in credit, the revenue must necessarily be diminished; and the loss in that respect will be a loss to the public in the most serious way, because it will be so much diminution to the revenue. The next point to be considered was, Whether bank notes were to be considered as a legal tender from the public to the individual? He was really sorry to say, as one who had paid some attention to Finance, that unless this was enacted by law, it would be impossible to carry on public affairs, for there was not specie enough in this country to pay all the public creditors; therefore, bank notes must go out of the Exchequer in aid of the specie, there being not enough of it to pay all the public creditors. The next point of view was, Whether bank notes should be considered as legal tender from one individual to another. Unless they were so, he was persuaded that one half of the public might be sent to jail for debt, and the other half would afterwards become bankrupts. The most important sight in which these things should be considered altogether was, the effect which the whole would have on foreigners. What influence would be upon every foreign commercial transaction, it would be impossible to calculate. It would alter the price of every commodity purchased of foreigners abroad; it would affect the value of every article exported to foreigners from home; it would shake the credit of Great Britain in the farthest parts of Russia, and be

felt in the remotest corners of the earth. It would vary the course of exchange in every mercantile transaction, and produce an effect which the utmost prudence, wisdom, and economy could not be able to retrieve for centuries to come. Unhappily, he feared, that sad impression had already been made, and our endeavours to efface it were applied too late. He lamented that earlier measures had not been taken to prevent it, especially since the danger had been long foreseen; but he had the consciousness of having washed his hands of it. He had done his duty, which, though a vain performance, gave him consolation, and he could do no more; for he held in his hand the copy of a letter which he had written to the Directors of the Bank so long ago as the 15th of September, 1795, wherein such measures were proposed as probably would have prevented the sad compulsion they were now reduced to. This letter suggested the propriety of issuing bank notes of 2 and 3l. value as well as notes for larger sums, that should not be immediately converted to specie. Since, however, the Directors did not choose to adopt any measures on that plan, and were now unfortunately driven to a worse alternative, he hoped and trusted that if a Committee be appointed, it would consist of able and independant men, and not of persons who from their prejudices, habits, or connections, would wish either to support or oppose the present Administration. That in their report they would state the subject with truth and justice. He trusted also, that under proper management, we might still be able to extricate ourselves from our present difficulties.

Mr. W. SMITH declared, that he had considerable hesitation with regard to the propriety of the measure now proposed to be adopted. He had heard the idea started of making bank notes a legal tender in all payments whatsoever; but this, he thought, was a step that could be no ways warranted by so superficial an inquiry as that which was now proposed. It appeared to him that the order of Council to the Bank Directors was, in fact, a direct injury to the Proprietors of the Bank of England. He had not heard that this order had been issued in consequence of any petition from the Directors or Proprietors, requesting the interference of the Legislature to make them bankrupts, and then to exonerate them from all claims for having so done; and yet, without any application on their behalf, this injury had, in fact, been done them by the order of Council. It might be inquired, how it came to pass that the respectable body of the Directors did not, in the first instance, reject such a measure when brought forward? For his own part, he should not wonder if the Proprietors at large were to demand of the Directors how they came to consent to such a measure. And what, he should ask, are the subsequent measures now proposed?

First, the exposure of the whole concerns of the Bank of England to a select Committee of the House of Commons, and, through them, to the Parliament, and the public at large; and all this without the request of the Directors of the Bank. Then with regard to the suggestion of holding forth a guarantee of the country at large, to an unlimited amount, Mr. Smith said, he apprehended that Parliament had no power to do this. Another injury which, he conceived, the Corporation of the Bank sustained was, that kind of compulsory partnership attempted betwixt the Governor on one hand, which he should consider as in part insolvent, and a flourishing company on the other, by whose credit the former wished to holster up their own. Such a partnership amongst individuals was what neither he nor any man would wish to have to do with; it was that of a man who would first compel him to be a bankrupt, and then demand a controul over his concerns. In what light, he would ask, would such conduct be considered betwixt man and man? would it not first create disgust; and then, if practicable, resistance? If there were no resistance to His Majesty's Ministers on the part of the Bank of England, to what was it to be attributed? First, he considered it to be owing to the overgrown influence of Government in all pecuniary concerns whatever. It was also easy to assign an additional reason why no remonstrances were presented upon this occasion. Every one knew the difficulty in which the whole commercial world had been involved, and that the want of a circulating medium had only been remedied by the liberal discounts of the Bank of England. In opposing a measure of this nature, no commercial man of respectable connections in London could step forward without being considered as a marked character, and drawing upon himself a degree of odium. Mr. Smith declared, that the motion of the right honourable gentleman appeared to him to be nugatory and illusive. For his own part, he would much sooner take the word of the Directors themselves, respecting the present state of their affairs, than any partial report of the Committee of the House of Commons.

Lord WYCOMBE said, it was with very deep concern he reflected that the greater part of the speeches he had heard upon this subject would have no better effect out of doors than the measure which was before them. Much as the Crown had lost in contest with foreign enemies, it had gained and triumphed over the rights and liberties, and sacrificed the interests of its British subjects. The House had proceeded upon every thing just as the Minister had thought fit to propose for some time. In their proceedings for the last four years, and more particularly of the last two, they had been

quite unmindful of the public rights and privileges of the people. They had availed themselves of the public torpor, and the public ignorance, to deprive them of their dearest rights. They had in their inquisitorial functions over the executive power been so indolent, encroachment upon popular rights so active, that the poor were so taxed and shackled, as to have nothing left that was worth regarding; and the rich were only waiting for an opportunity to see peace restored, in order that they might seek their enjoyments in another country. Of the present Parliament it became him to say nothing. He should not have troubled the House with one word on this occasion, if he were not convinced of the necessity of something being done from a recent instance of what had happened. He was alarmed indeed at the consequence to which this measure was leading us. He had long thought very unfavourably of the affairs of this country; but he did not think that so very soon after the conclusion of a treaty of negotiation, which was not a trial for peace, but a trial of skill between the parties, where the only point in dispute was, which of the parties should furnish the best apology for the continuance of the war; he could not think, he said, that Ministers would so soon have brought on the ruin of this country.

He should hardly have thought that Ministers would have insisted on Belgium, at the *sine qua non* of peace, and that the public credit of this country was to be the price of their obstinacy in this particular. The measure now before the House might be justifiable, because it might be indispensable on other grounds, but he could not help regretting the dark and sinister manner in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had brought it forward. It was not fit that the public should be kept in suspense. It would ill become the House to take steps in the dark. If he had reason to believe that the suspension of payment enjoined by the Privy Council was necessary for public purposes, and he had reason to believe it was intended to pursue this step to remove a public pressure at home, he should have no objection to accede to it, but as he was inclined to fear, from various circumstances, from the scandalous treaty with the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt, that all this was intended merely to cover a design of sending money to the continent to carry on the war, he was bound in duty to give it his negative. If he thought that any thing, by way of relieving this country, was seriously intended by it, he should, to make it in his opinion effectual, move an amendment upon it; but as he thought it bad *ab initio*, he must oppose it. The House should reflect on the evils which such a measure as this would not fail to produce. It would lessen the value of paper currency of the kingdom. He had seen the misery which that had produced in other parts of the world, by raising

most rapidly the price of all provisions, and bringing on a train of misery with which that House was unacquainted.

Mr. POLLEN rose, and spoke to this effect :

“ Mr. Speaker, I do not make any apology to the House for engaging their attention at this important moment, since, because it is important, I feel that every man should utter the ideas which occur to him. A right honourable gentleman has drawn a comparison between the glorious period of Lord Chatham’s Administration and the present embarrassed and gloomy circumstances of his son’s ministry ; and he has said, that even to that Lord Chatham he would not have given his confidence without particular inquiry into his conduct and measures. Now, Sir, I confess that my idea of confidence differ from that of the right honourable Member, and that when able designs in theory and uniform success in practice go hand in hand, you can have no cause for suspicion, and therefore none for inquiry. But, Sir, when I look at the present state of this country ; when I behold the public curiosity awakened into an order to grasp the cause of its difficulties, and to discover whence it arises that Great Britain, once so powerful at sea, once so rich in manufactures, once so abounding in wealth, should now be insulted in its navy, sinking in its trade, and dishonoured in its credit ; I say, Sir, an inquiry should be made, and a most accurate inquiry too, or I very much fear the consequences of public dissatisfaction at ignorance which may be removed. Few circumstances could distress me more than to believe, that His Majesty’s Ministers, whose abilities I have been accustomed to admire, and integrity to revere, should be found culpable in the discharge of their duty. Indeed, Sir, I do not believe it ; and *on this* account, therefore, I am more anxious that the inquiry should take place, not doubting that they will not be found wanting in the balance : if they are, I shall certainly remove with as much determination as I have given them my support ; and on these grounds I think myself bound to vote for the amendment.”

Mr. CHARLES YORKE was doubtful whether or not he should vote for an unlimited inquiry. He apprehended that such an inquiry must in its nature be tedious ; and delay, under the present urgency of circumstances, might have the most fatal consequences. No time was, therefore, to be lost ; but if the Committee required farther powers, farther powers might be granted, when the necessity of them should appear. He would refrain from any opposition that might obstruct and retard a speedy report.

Mr. WILBERFORCE BIRD said, that as soon as he heard of the order of the Privy Council, he was filled with alarm for the situation of manufacturers, and instantly waited on the Bank Di-

rectors, in the anxious hope that some reserve had been made in favour of that useful and industrious description of men. But much to his concern, he found that no such reserve had been made. He had the honour to represent a manufacturing town; and he had instructions from his constituents to inquire what method would be recommended to enable them to carry on their business, and to answer the many demands to which it naturally exposed them. He did not intend to put any trifling or unnecessary question, with a view to embarrass Ministers, but in the desire to obviate the difficulties in which manufacturers must be involved, and, by a timely removal of them, to promote and secure the peace and tranquillity of the country. And, indeed, no method should be left untried, that could tend to compose the public mind, which was considerably agitated by the present aspect of affairs. He trusted little, or not at all, to any financial skill of his own; but he relied much on what had fallen from an honourable Baronet (Sir John Sinclair), whose deep information in this and every other branch of useful knowledge, was generally and deservedly acknowledged; our system of finance, the worthy Baronet conceived, might be materially corrected and improved, and with a view to that improvement he would vote for the general inquiry, unless some convincing reasons were brought forward to induce him to alter his opinion. A rumour had gone abroad, that it was the intention of the Bank to issue small notes, of one and two guineas each, and he was exceedingly solicitous to know if the rumour had any foundation, as such an expedient, if put in practice, would considerably quiet the alarm that prevailed in manufacturing towns, and enable manufacturers to answer the many claims that are continually made on them.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that the urgency of providing for the necessity of small payments, had suggested the idea of doing something with this view. The Bank, therefore, in contemplation of the proclamation, had intended to issue small notes, and he hoped this might be done in a few days. It was not, however, quite clear whether, by law, any notes below 5l. could be issued. This appeared so simple a point, that he was convinced the House would be of opinion that this circumstance ought, as little as possible, to delay the convenience wanted. It was therefore his intention, before the House separated, to move for leave to bring in a bill, which might be carried through very quickly, to enable the Bank to issue notes below 5l. value.

Sir WILLIAM PULTENEY said, that the order of Council which Ministers had thought proper to issue, had given rise to just alarm. He gave them credit, however, for having so speedily laid before the House a measure of this importance. He considered the

state of the country as in reality no worse in consequence of the present step, provided wise measures were taken upon it. The stoppage of payment in cash was not to be held as a permanent system, but merely as the alternative adopted under the pressure of the moment. The motives, however, assigned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, did not satisfy him that it was to be only for a limited time. Indeed it was impossible to think of it as a measure to be continued. There was, indeed, a great difference between the measure itself and the continuance of it. In the year 1793, the Newcastle banks had declared as now, that they must stop the payment of their notes in cash, under the pressure of a temporary scarcity; but they soon obtained the necessary supply, and went on again as before. This would happen in the present instance, for the Bank Directors were known to be responsible. Such was the case of the Bank, and such would be the event if wise measures were taken to supply the demand. It was notorious to every body that the Bank had not always beside them the cash for all the notes they issued; for if they had, why issue notes at all? it could serve no purpose. The Bank merely kept what was conceived to be necessary. They had value, however, in good bills, or otherwise, for all the notes they issued, and money was within their reach. It was impossible, however, that when an extraordinary run, arising from any particular circumstances, came upon them at once, that they could immediately answer it, but they would, doubtless, be able to answer all demands. This ought to be fully known, and to be properly considered. Still, however, the causes which had contributed to place the Bank in this situation ought to be ascertained. Such a measure as that adopted by Administration might do no harm for once; but if such a case again occurred, it would be no joke. It was therefore highly necessary to inquire into the causes, and in future they might be prevented. The plan of the inquiry proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not enough. Partial reports from the Committee would not be sufficient. To prevent the same dilemma from recurring was the great point. He was convinced, and he did not say it vaguely, that there were means to prevent it. But the causes ought to be fully known. He did not think the cause of such a kind as ought not to be divulged. No mischief could arise from a full investigation. The measure of refusing the payments in cash must be for a short time, or the consequences would be fatal. In France, on account of an occasional pressure, the bankers joined in application with the *caisse d'escompte*, that they might not be obliged to pay their notes in cash, which gave a blow to their paper money, which it never recovered. This measure was merely calculated for the

emergency of the occasion. It was certain that the country could not stand if the credit of the Bank was shaken ; it was therefore necessary to protect its stability, and by a full inquiry into the causes which had led to this situation, to guard against the danger of its again recurring. With regard to the cause, he thought he knew where it lay ; but he should say a few words with regard to the exportation of specie and bullion to the Emperor. In fact, the existence of paper money made the exportation of specie necessary. What was thus put out of circulation must go somewhere. It was impossible to prevent the exportation of specie and bullion. Spain and Portugal were instances ; and if the prohibition were complied with, they would feel its bad effects. Industry, agriculture, manufactures, were the true riches of a country, and would always command a sufficient supply of the precious metals.

Mr. HUSSEY said, that the honourable Baronet had made several observations about the cash kept by the Bank, and the consequences of exportation ; but would the honourable Baronet say, that the advances made to the Emperor would return in two months to supply the demand for cash which might come upon the Bank ? But, in fact, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and not the Bank themselves, had occasioned the measure of stopping their payments in cash. It was the Chancellor of the Exchequer who imposed upon them this fatal order. Let him pay to them all the money they had advanced, and then the difficulty would cease. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had, in fact, laid his rapacious hands (he was not fond of harsh epithets, but it was justified by the truth) upon the sums destined for the payment of the public creditor. He knew that the public creditors had been refused their just demands. He had witnessed the truth of this woeful circumstances himself. He had been told by a person who had applied for payment, that in payment of a sum of 231. three pounds in cash had been offered, and the rest only in notes. Such a melancholy day as this for England he had hoped never to live to see. Let the Chancellor of the Exchequer pay the ten millions Government owed the Bank, and then it would be able to fulfil all its engagements. It was not that the Bank was unable to satisfy its creditors, but it was the continued demand of money to feed the expences of this ruinous and disastrous war, which rendered it unjust to those who depended upon its credit. It was not the Bank, but the Minister who had adopted this measure, in order that he might be supplied with money, which he squandered for the ruin, not for the advantage of his country. Taxes were established for the payment of the public creditor ; but what were those to think who were called upon to pay specie, when they knew that the public creditor was to be paid,

not in money, but in paper. It was idle in the extreme ; it was deluding the people to talk of a Committee such as that proposed. This was mere mockery. Instead of such idle stuff as this, let the Chancellor of the Exchequer raise money, and pay off the ten millions due to the Bank, and then every thing would go smoothly : this was the proper way to act with effect. Paper money, when forced as payment, must necessarily be depreciated. The country had already been called upon to come forward to assist the wants of the State, and he himself had been one of those simpletons who came forward on the occasion. Let ten millions be again raised in the same manner to discharge the arrears due to the Bank, and every thing would resume its usual course. The Bank had enough to satisfy all demands, if those on whom it had made advances, that is, the Government, were to pay what they have contracted.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he had been called upon so immediately by the honourable Baronet, and the gentleman who had just sat down, that he hoped for the indulgence of the House while he made a few observations in reply, which was the more necessary as so much misconception was evident in the manner in which the subject had been taken up. The honourable Baronet was alarmed at the way in which the proposal was conceived, as it implied that the measure was to be permanent. He could assure the House, however, that nothing could be farther from his intention. So much the contrary, that he had not the smallest objection that a limited time should be fixed ; and the words from which the conclusion of its continuation was inferred, had been introduced solely in this view. The measure which it had been judged proper to take, and which had given rise to the order of Council, was one, however, which, while it continued, ought to have the sanction of legislative authority. This was the reason which urged him to simplify and to accelerate the inquiry upon which the House was called upon to decide. It was a measure which required the utmost promptitude. Whatever inquiries it might be afterwards thought advisable to pursue ; whatever retrospect of past events might be made, and whatever remedies might be suggested by a general consideration of future contingencies, the present measures required an investigation less extensive, and a decision more expeditious. The question for the House at present was, whether they wished a measure which was conceived necessary to remain so long as the extended inquiry would demand, without the sanction of legislative authority ? If they were of opinion that, in the present circumstances, it would not be proper to leave it without that sanction, they ought to narrow the inquiry. With respect to the causes which produ

the necessity of the measure, opinions would be as different as the sentiments of individuals. He was ready to say, however, that the Austrian loan, though one of the causes which might influence the great events which operated on our situation, was not the immediate cause to which the necessity was to be ascribed. Was it necessary to go into so extensive a field of inquiry to ascertain whether a specific measure, already found necessary, was to be sanctioned for a limited time by legislative authority? The inquiry which was most practicable was certainly at present that which was most prudent. The causes which may have contributed to produce this situation, the remedies that may be applied to obviate its bad effects, and the means which may be adopted to prevent its taking place in future, were considerations undoubtedly of the highest magnitude and importance; but they were less urgent than the immediate inquiry he had proposed, because they might be postponed without inconvenience: they would afford room for calm and temperate deliberation: they would be discussed to greater advantage after a pause of reflection, and with the coolness of the understanding, instead of being taken up in the first ebullition of passion, and in the warmth of immature consideration. The honourable gentleman wished to know what was the cause of the measure which it was judged prudent to adopt. He would take the liberty to say, that the sudden drain upon the metropolis was unconnected with any circumstances which could infer either the deficiency of the Bank, or the unprosperous situation of the Country. The rate of foreign exchanges never were more flourishing than at this moment. The necessity of the measure originated in a sudden demand beyond the usual average. With regard to the quantities of money exported, and the remittances received, it was a point which the House could ascertain by a motion of their own better than by any question to him. This run might have occasioned a demand, which, when connected with the alarm which prevailed, would have produced the worst effects, and reduced the country to a very dangerous situation. The short question for the House, however, was, to prove the reality of the situation which had produced the order of Council. The causes would be so differently viewed according to political and commercial opinions of men, that they more properly belonged to future discussion. The inquiry immediately relating to the point before the House was urged in the first instance by every consideration of public interest and public duty. With regard to the observation of the honourable gentleman, "pay the Bank what they have advanced, and they will be able to answer demands," it was founded entirely on mistake. Did the

honourable gentleman imagine that the Bank advanced their specie to Government ; or that he, with rapacious hand, had seized upon so much money as he had mentioned ? By far the greater part of that sum was floating advances, not now made for the first time ; nor was there more now outstanding than had been upon many occasions before he came into office at all. The advances were commonly made in notes, and paid in the same manner ; unless the Bank had no other advances but those to Government ; and unless these occasioned an issue of their paper, inferring a demand for specie which otherwise would not have taken place, it could not be said that the advances to Government could in any view produce the difficulties of the Bank for cash. It was not impossible that, upon some future occasion, a loan might be required, for the purpose of taking up these floating advances ; but, did the honourable gentleman conceive that such a loan could be in specie ? This was not the moment, in the midst of these embarrassments, to propose such a loan ; and, though it were transacted, it could not supply the Bank with a single additional guinea in cash. Surely it would not be proposed to give up the inquiry into the measure which he had brought forward, and, instead of it, require him to borrow money for such purposes, and with such expectations as this. The honourable gentleman supposed that taxes were paid in specie, and that the public creditor, on the other hand, was not to be paid at all. The public creditor, however, like every other person, often received notes instead of cash. Upon such a question as this, it was proper to look at general usage. It was a fact well known, that loans were often advanced without any expectation of being paid in specie ; nor could the Bank ever have it in contemplation, that every quarterly dividend was to be paid in cash ; nor did they form their arrangements upon that supposition. All the receipt of the revenue paper was taken in the same manner. The observations of the honourable gentleman were entirely founded in mistake ; and, as he hoped he was guided by motives of candour, he would be aware of the false grounds on which he had formed his conclusions. He should repeat, therefore, that the inquiry which was necessary to be entered upon at present was comprehended in his original proposal ; whatever went beyond that object might, with much greater advantage, be referred to a future opportunity.

Mr. CURWEN said, that this was another rash endeavour on the part of the Minister to delude the country. He had really expected that he would have stopped before he had proceeded to this fatal extremity. The arguments of the Ministers at this time of day were a mockery of their feelings and understandings ; he said

that paper was in common usage taken by the public creditor ; but, good God, was not the case now widely different, when paper could no longer be converted into cash at pleasure ? It was now indeed the duty of all to endeavour to save the country, and to proportion their efforts to the danger which threatened. Let the Minister say plainly what is the real situation of the country ; it was evident that when wages were paid to manufacturers and labourers, the value of silver would rise, and the price of articles of consumption increase. Now in a moment so critical as this, every motive but that of saving the country should be laid aside ; surely there was little gratification now offered to ambition. No man could envy the situation of the Minister. He really felt for the right honourable gentleman's situation, but he felt more for that of the country. The House ought to examine into our situation with the most scrutinizing accuracy, and step in to rescue the nation from ruin. It was not now the downfall of a Minister, but it was the safety of the country that was at stake. If property was to be overturned, the men of property would be buried in its ruins, and those who had been foremost in opposition to the right honourable gentleman, perhaps would not be the last sacrifices. If the country was still blind to its own situation, their representatives, who had been entrusted with the charge of watching over its interests, ought to recall all their vigilance on so important an occasion, and exert themselves to encounter the storm and carry into port the vessel of the state. Ministers might be assured that the Country feels their corruption and mismanagement. Convinced as he was of the loyalty of the people, and their attachment to the Constitution, he desired Ministers to beware how they tried these sentiments too far. There was a point beyond which they would not bear. The House must now act with firmness. They must display, not confidence, but exertion. Unless the House made a decided stand, the Country would be ruined.

Mr. BRANDLING mentioned some circumstances concerning the Newcastle Bank which had a run on it a few years ago, but was supported in its credit by a voluntary association of gentlemen.

Mr. BASTARD said, that the partial inquiry proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, would do much harm rather than produce good. It was his opinion that the Bank needed no support ; but if the state of the Bank was to be investigated, was it not of much greater importance to know the state of the country ? Parliament ought to regain—he could use no other word—Parliament ought to regain the confidence of the country. If the people had confidence in Parliament, then there must be an end of it. If

necessary, the Committee, in proceeding to the extended inquiry which the Country demanded, might first report with regard to the subject which was stated to be so urgent. In the present situation of affairs, every little consideration and individual attachment ought to be given up. They ought to combine to apply a powerful remedy. They must controul the conduct of Ministers, be who they may. They ought to cut off that prodigality and profusion which had prevailed, and to re-establish that economy which had been neglected. They ought to see that the money raised for the public service was fairly applied. They must employ strong measures, but they must retrench, they must regulate, they must controul. Without this there was no hope. Without fairly examining into our situation, there was no chance of salvation.

Mr. DENT stated, that nothing but personal animosity had passed in the debate, from which he inferred, that the Ins wanted to keep in, and the Outs to get in. With regard to the question of inquiry, he thought, so far from being attended with good, it would do infinite harm. The Bank was equal to all fair demands that could come against it, though not prepared to answer an extraordinary exigency, whether arising from the pressure of the war, or other occasions—a war not entered into by this country from choice, but a war wantonly made against us by a people who had denied the existence of a Being.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that after the last speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer he had been extremely impatient in reply. He had been very ready, however, to give way to other gentlemen who wished to deliver their opinions, with the most of which he had been extremely pleased. He would have regretted, particularly, had he prevented the honourable gentleman opposite to him (Mr. Dent) from favouring the House with the observations they had just now heard. The honourable gentleman began with lamenting the scurrilous mode in which the debate had been conducted on both sides of the House, and by way of a lesson of politeness, he added that he believed the motive of one side was to keep in, whereas the other was to get into place. A very desirable object to be sure in the present state of public affairs! He farther told them that they were engaged in a war against an enemy who denied the existence of a Being, and who acknowledged nothing either divine or human. The phraseology was very strange. Mr. Sheridan supposed, however, that he meant the French were a nation of Atheists. Supposing even that they were, he by no means conceived that this operated as an apology for the unexampled prodigality with which the war was connected; on the contrary, he

believed that an Atheist might be shot at as little expence as a Christian. After adverting to Mr. Dent's speech in a strain of pleantry, Mr. Sheridan professed his satisfaction in agreeing with most of the observations of the gentlemen to whom he had given way. There certainly was no moment in which the British House of Commons had been more powerfully called upon to renounce all dependance on Ministers, and to repose confidence in themselves, and he was happy to see this laudable independence manifesting itself in the speeches of this evening. In the last speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, upon which he meant to make a few remarks, the right honourable gentleman had availed himself of the Speaker's indulgence, and of the forms of the House, by which the opener of a debate was permitted to conclude it. He had no doubt that in making that speech he wished to conclude the debate; it by no means followed, however, that because he had spoken a second time the debate should be concluded. As gentlemen were allowed, however, in special circumstances, to speak twice in the course of one debate, he was aware the right honourable gentleman had not violated the rules of the House, for there was no person who would not agree that the circumstances in which he spoke were very particular, the more so as he was left by his friends to have the sole conduct of his own defence. The speech, he owned, was a very strong one. It had been remarked that persons were sometimes deprived of their intellects by severe distress, and from the tenor of his argument, he was also led to conclude that the embarrassments of his situation had produced that effect upon the right honourable gentleman. In one part of his argument he advanced the absurd position that were Government to discharge all the debts they owed to the Bank, as the payment would be made good in paper, it would not relieve that public body from the difficulties produced by their present want of cash. But was any man so ignorant as not to know the deficiency arose not merely from the positive want of cash, but from the comparative quantity of paper which they had issued, and the demands of which they had not cash enough to answer? Of course when this paper was returned to them, they would find themselves at liberty, with safety to themselves, to issue a greater proportion of their specie. For instance, supposing the Bank of England to have issued ten millions in paper by way of loan, and to be possessed of one million in cash, as a sum sufficient to answer the demand, certainly if five millions of this loan were repaid them, they might issue five hundred thousand pounds out of the million of specie, because the run upon their cash would in that case be diminished precisely half. The right ho-

honourable gentleman had alledged that the dividends on stock were always paid in notes. But were the notes the same before, that they are now? Was not the question always put to the creditor whether he would take his dividend in paper or in cash? And when it was put in his choice, he took it in paper, because he might have had cash if he pleased: With respect to the effect of the measure upon the bank credit, it certainly had inflicted upon it a very severe stroke, and he saw only one way in which it could possibly recover it, which was by the Bank coming forward, and shewing the country that they had adopted the measure from compulsion. An honourable gentleman (Mr. Balford) had urged in very proper and becoming language, the necessity of cutting off every thing superfluous; he was not of a sanguinary disposition, but when he saw a person presiding in one of the principal departments of public affairs, and ruining the Country by his measures, he was at a loss to know what ought to be cut off first, but he was convinced that some example ought to be made for the instruction of both the present and of future times. An honourable Baronet (Sir William Pulteney) observed, that if the measure was repeated it would make but a bad joke. If it was a joke, it certainly was one at which the country was not much disposed to laugh; but if it was tolerated in this instance, he was afraid that these facetious measures would frequently occur. What then was to be done in order to prevent them from ever again recurring? An honourable gentleman (Mr. Hussey) had said that to retrieve the credit of the Bank, Government had only to discharge the sums advanced them by the Bank; but he would add, that it was necessary also that Government should pay all their creditors as well as the Bank; that they should pay the Civil List; that they should pay the half-pay officers who were now almost starving; that they should pay their agents and their contractors. Mr. Sheridan conceived that it was by no means a temporary expedient, but he foresaw that the Bank never would be able afterwards to defray its outstanding engagements in cash. For how was it possible that they could, since they were about to issue a greater quantity of paper, and their cash was seized upon for the public service? The honourable Baronet, who advanced a contrary opinion, and who knew more about business than most gentlemen of equal property, had too much good sense not to acknowledge the error on which it was founded. Mr. Sheridan next reprobated the transaction as a step to associate the bankrupt Government with the solvent Bank; a partnership which, if the Bank Directors knew the interest of the concern under their direction they ought to spurn, and to force the right honourable gentleman to

withdraw his indorsements from their bills. But it was urged that the Bank had temporary difficulties to encounter, and that it behoved them to adopt some mode of granting relief to that important public body. The House of Commons, however, knew nothing of this. No application was made to them by the Bank, nor did it appear even that application had been made for the order in Council; on the contrary, it appeared that this facetious Council, instead of examining the Directors of the Bank, acted entirely upon the authority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Nay, what added to his surprise was, that not one of the Bank Directors who had seats in that House, had ever come forward and expressed an opinion upon the subject. Some information was certainly necessary before the House sanctioned so novel and dangerous a measure. They had heard of the Bank a short time ago lending two millions to Government, and they had also heard of the dividends on Bank Stock increasing. Was it not material to be informed therefore how they had come to stop payment at a time when their affairs seemed to be going on so prosperously? Perhaps the Directors might be to blame. He did not say that it was so, but the House ought to be satisfied that it was not so. They were not even apprised whether it was the wish of the Bank that the measure should be adopted. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said it was, but he took nothing upon his word, and therefore called upon some of the Directors of the Bank to come forward and say whether it was or was not at their desire that the order in Council had been issued. There was something unaccountable on the face of the business, for the Bank to announce its own solvency immediately after it had been ordered to stop payment; and if it was solvent, why was an order issued which would operate so much to the injury of their credit? For his own part he did not approve of opening a Committee to inquire into the affairs of the Bank, because he had the firmest confidence in its solidity, and such an inquiry might considerably hurt its credit, but he deemed it highly expedient that a Committee should be appointed to inquire into the grounds upon which the order in Council had been issued. He was of opinion, at all events, that the two inquiries ought not to be separated. An instruction, if necessary, might be given to the Committee, to report upon the circumstances of the Bank before it entered upon the other inquiry. But he did not perceive that so much dispatch was requisite, because the proclamation, at present, had all the effect of a law, and a bill might be immediately passed as a matter of temporary accommodation, to enable the Bank to issue small notes. So far, however, as he had made up his opinion, he disapproved of

a Committee to inquire into the circumstances of the Bank, as such an inquiry might be productive of evil, and could not possibly do any good. For what was the result expected to be? There was but one hope, and one opinion, that the Bank would be found to be perfectly secure. Why then should the public guarantee their notes? As well might the master of the Mint indorse a guinea. But what was the nature of this guarantee which Government so generously offered to the Bank? Government first lays hands on the cash of the Bank. Next day Government says, you cannot pay your notes; no, replies the Bank, because you have taken away our cash; very well, then, say Government, you must stop payment till we examine into your affairs, form a partnership, and indorse your bills. The Bank might very justly answer; give us back our cash, and we neither want your partnership nor your guarantee. Had such a man as Sir John Barnard presided at the Bank, he would have taken the order of Council and thrown it in the face of the Messenger, for in either case it was an affront upon that body. If they had cash, what right had the Chancellor of the Exchequer to seize upon it; if they had none, it was an insult to pretend to prohibit them from issuing it. And what was the value of this guarantee, which Government was so generous as to offer to the Bank? Had not Government broken its faith with all its creditors, with the Bank, with the Emperor of Germany, and with every individual who were in possession of its acceptances? The solidity of the Bank would be infinitely stronger, if it remained entirely unconnected with so discreditable a partner. Mr. Sheridan then suggested the steps which, in his opinion, ought to be taken, if the difficulties really existed. Bank-notes ought to be made a legal tender to Government, and Government ought to be compelled to make every payment in bank-notes, except the dividends on the public stock, which ought to be paid in cash. He was unfriendly to a Committee to inquire into the situation of the Bank, but, instead of opposing it, he would move an amendment, That these words be inserted into the original motion after "this House," "And also to inquire into the causes which have produced this order in Council, and the grounds of providing for the order in Council, dated the 26th of February, providing for the confirmation and continuance of measures contained in said order."

Mr. THORNTON said, that as Mr. Sheridan, and several gentlemen who had spoken before, had been pleased to appeal personally to him, and also to other Members of the House who were Directors of the Bank, he desired to acquaint them, he was restrained

from satisfying their curiosity by a sense of the duty which he owed to the public welfare. That if the House in its wisdom shall see fit to institute any Committee of Inquiry, there was no investigation which the Directors would not most cheerfully meet, as they were conscious it must tend to their honour, and to the support of the credit and high reputation of the Bank of England.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS wished to obviate, if not the misapprehension, at least the misrepresentation of the honourable gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) who had asserted, that the Bank would be rendered less acute by the guarantee which was offered to it by Government. If the House rejected the original motion, the Bank would be left with an order of Council hanging over it, not to issue cash, but to make its payments in the manner thereby directed. Did Mr. Sheridan intend that this should be the case? or did he mean to take off the embargo, without letting the country know why it had been imposed? The first object which he wished that a Committee should be called to ascertain, was the stability of the Bank. The amendment proposed, negatived the original motion; but while the honourable gentleman professed himself adverse to an inquiry, he thought to enlarge it by adding a question respecting the causes of the embargo; and these were alledged to be a total mismanagement in every department of finance. Thus an inquiry into every circumstance of the war, from its commencement to the present time, would be set on foot; and this great first object of satisfying the public with respect to the solvency of the Bank, would be delayed till the state of the nation, in every particular, could have been ascertained.

What Mr. Sheridan had said of the inaccuracies of Committees, and of the incomplete manner in which their reports were framed, was, he believed, in general, true, and therefore much to be regretted. But the honourable gentleman, under this impression, came forward when a motion was made to refer a particular question to the examination of a Committee, and proposed also to refer to a Committee the inquiry into every public measure which could be said to be any ways connected with the state of the nation; thus providing an immense additional labour for those whom he thought incapable of discharging their duty properly. The reason why he (Mr. Dundas) wished it to go into a Secret Committee was, that it might be necessary to put questions to the Bank Directors, which it might not be proper to make public.

Mr. GREY rose to explain the amendment, and to correct Mr. Dundas, when he stated, that his honourable friend was adverse to

any inquiry into the state of the Bank. It was not because an inquiry was not necessary, that it had been objected to, but because it was thought inconvenient.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL said, that the case was shortly this: An order of Council, without any legal validity, had been sent to the first monied company in the kingdom, and this order had been complied with. It was universally agreed, that such an order should not have been issued, except it was warranted by necessity, and that it should continue in force no longer than the necessity which gave rise to it continued. The question therefore was, whether the House should not immediately proceed to discuss the circumstances under which it had issued, with a view to determining whether it ought any longer to be acted under? As he saw the necessity of an immediate determination on a business of such consequence, he should vote against the amendment.

Mr. FOX considered the questions of the measures to be adopted, and of the cause of the present situation, as inseparable. Till the House were apprized of what produced the order, they could not well know how to apply the remedy. If he were in a Committee of the House, and desirous to discover the cause, he should, in the first instance, call the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the bar, and examine him. It was obvious, that the nature of the relief which was to be afforded, must depend on the cause of the evil. If it should appear, as had been suggested by Sir William Pulteney, that the debts owing by Government to the Bank had been the occasion of its stopping payment, then it was clear that a different remedy must be applied from that to which recourse would have been had, if it had been owing to other circumstances.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he considered the motion and amendment, as comprising three distinct inquiries. Though they were all retained in the amended motion, yet Mr. Sheridan had, by the tenor of three-fourths of his speech, objected to that part of the motion which pressed the inquiry into the state of the Bank. His inquiry, he wished, however, to be made with a view to shew that the ultimate resources of that Company were solid, and more than equal to the discharge of all claims on them. He considered this as the more necessary, because, while the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) had said, that he was convinced of the fact, and stood in need of nothing to confirm him in his belief, he stated their late conduct as an act of bankruptcy not to be remedied. When gentlemen then cried up the solidity of a corporate body, and their satisfaction in its security in one moment; and in the next, imputed bankruptcy to it, an inquiry was rendered necessary, to establish its

reputation for being equal to the discharge of all its engagements; and it seemed to him highly proper, after such language, that the truth of the proposition should be ascertained by some record; and that it should be generally known from the result of accurate investigation, that the ultimate property of the Bank of England was equal to more than all the demands which could be made on it.

What the right honourable gentleman had called an act of bankruptcy, was certainly an act of pressing necessity, and the fact of the existence of this necessity could not be too soon inquired into. It was on the part of the Bank a compulsory act; yet if this act had been their own, instead of being the result of a resolution of Government, could this be called by the commercial world an act of bankruptcy? This measure, too, was called in question by gentlemen who had approved the conduct of the bank of Newcastle, which, with unshaken credit, had thought proper to suspend its payments, and which proved ultimately to have done so with applause. The Bank of England had acted in the same manner, though on a larger scale. The merchants of London had given a sanction to its proceedings, by their resolution. Neither speaking technically, nor in the language of common life, could it be said to be an act of bankruptcy to withhold the payment of money, where the person withholding it was finally in a solvent state? But at the same time, wherever money was thus delayed from a creditor, some proof was necessary to establish the fact, that the debtor's capital was solid. That proof the Bank now wished to lay before the House, and it being in so short a compass, it would not occasion a delay of many hours. This inquiry into the capital was the first of the three which the amendment contained. The next went to ascertain the existence of the necessity which justified the measure, and the continuation of that necessity. The third, which had been added by the honourable mover of the amendment, was, to discover the causes of this necessity. If the necessity was established, he did not see the immediate importance of this latter inquiry previous to adopting any resolutions in consequence of the former two. He thought that gentlemen might afterwards enter into it, since the information of which they would then be in possession, would not hinder, but assist them in their search. Nothing could be more clear, than that in the exercise of practical duty, that which would admit of delay should be postponed, and that which required immediate deliberation preferred.

Mr. FOX explained. He had not made use of the word bankruptcy as applicable to the state of the Bank, but to the Government, to which he contended it was always applicable. The alarm which

he felt arose from no circumstance in the capital of the Bank, but from the control which the Government exercised over it.

The House divided upon the amendment ; Ayes 88, Noes 244; Majority 156.

*List of the Minority, on Mr. Sheridan's amendment, "That the
" Committee should inquire into the causes which produced the Order
" of Council of the 20th instant."*

Aubry, Sir J.	Lemon, Sir W.
Baker, J.	Lloyd, J. M.
Bampfylde, J. C.	Milner, Sir W.
Barclay, G.	Nicholls, J.
Bastard, J. P.	North, D.
Beauclerk, C.	Northey, W.
Biddulph, R.	Pierse, H.
Baker, W.	Palk, L.
Bunbury, Sir C.	Phillips, J. G.
Bird, W. W.	Plumer, W.
Burdett, Sir F.	Pollen, G. A.
Bouverie, Hon. E.	Porter, G.
Brogden, J.	Pulteney, Sir W.
Burch, J. R.	Rawdon, Hon. J.
Byng, J.	Rawdon, Hon. G.
Clarke, E.	Ridley, Sir M.
Coke, F.	Richardson, J.
Combe, H. C.	Robson, R. B.
Courtenay, J.	Russell, Lord J.
Crewe, J.	Russell, Lord W.
Curwen, J. C.	St. John St. A.
Copley, Sir L.	Scudamore, J.
Dolben, Sir W.	Sheridan, R. B.
Dashwood, Sir H. W.	Shum, G. C.
Denison, W. J.	Shuckburg, Sir G.
Dundas, C.	Sinclair, Sir J.
Fitzpatrick, General	Smith, W.
Fletcher, Sir H.	Spencer, Lord R.
Folkes, Sir R.	Stanley, Lord
Fox, Right Hon. C. J.	Sturt, C.
Galway, Viscount	Tarleton, General
Greene, J.	Taylor, C. W.
Hare, J.	Tyrwhitt, T.
Harrison, J.	Townshend, Lord J.
Hobhouse,	Tufton, Hon. H.
Hussey, W.	Vane, Sir F.
Jefferys, N.	Vyner, R.
Jervoise, C. J.	Walwyn, J.
Keen, W.	Walpole, Colonel
Kemp, T.	Western, C. C.
Knight, R. P.	Wilkins, W.
Langston, J.	Winnington, Sir F.
Langston, W. G.	Wycombe, Earl of

TELLERS—Charles Grey, and Samuel Whitbread.

Wednesday, 1st March.

Lord Viscount STOPFORD reported to the House, that their address of yesterday (to return His Majesty the thanks of this House for his most gracious message : to assure His Majesty, that the House will proceed, without delay, to the consideration of the important subject which His Majesty has recommended to their attention ; and that His Majesty may rely on our earnest and anxious desire to adopt such measures as the circumstances may appear to require, and as may be best calculated to meet the pressure of any temporary difficulties, and to call forth, at this important conjuncture, the extensive resources of the kingdom, in support of our public and commercial credit, and in defence of our dearest interests) had been presented to His Majesty ; and that His Majesty was pleased to receive the same very graciously.

Mr. WILBERFORCE BIRD observed, that in consequence of the present scarcity of cash in the hands of manufacturers, occasioned, as had been stated already to the House, and on which some parliamentary proceedings had been founded, it became necessary that bankers and manufacturers in the country should be enabled to issue out notes, payable at stated times ; without such a provision it was impossible for such bankers and manufacturers to carry on their business for the present. There were laws now in force to prohibit the issuing of small promissory notes, payable otherwise than on demand. His object was to suspend for a time the operation of such law, and to allow the issuing of promissory notes for a limited time, as if such laws were not in existence. There could not be much inconvenience, at least not as much as could equal the convenience to this measure, by allowing country bankers and manufacturers to issue these small notes, for they would be known in the neighbourhood in which the notes were issued, and the persons who held them could have no difficulty in procuring payment for them. But as the metropolis was to be considered in another light, and much difficulty might arise in the provisions extended to it, he should propose that the bill for which he intended to move for leave to bring in should not be extended to the cities of London and Westminster, nor to the borough of Southwark. In the year 1754 the Legislature, taking into consideration the inconvenience that arose to the lower class of society from their being paid in small notes, payable at a future time, from the manufacturers who employed them, they being unable, in many cases, properly to understand them, &c. passed an act prohibiting the issuing of any promissory note for less than twenty shillings, payable any otherwise

than upon demand, together with other provisions, declaring such note to be null and void, &c.

In the seventeenth year of the King another act was passed, which, after reciting the beneficial effects of the former act, and stating that it did not embrace a sufficient number of cases, extended many of the provisions of the former act to all notes payable otherwise than upon demand, and which were for less than 5l. together with other enactments; &c. It was impossible for the manufacturers and bankers in the country to carry on their business under temporary pressure, if they were to comply with the provisions of these two acts, and therefore he moved for leave to bring in a bill, to suspend, for a time to be limited, the operations of those acts, as far as related to bankers not residing in the cities of London and Westminster, and the borough of Southwark.

The SPEAKER said, it would not be regular to move any thing that related to an existing act without reading it.

The two acts being read accordingly, the question was put upon the motion.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, he deplored the necessity to which we were now driven upon the subject of specie all over this kingdom. The remedy now proposed he feared and believed to be absolutely necessary. It would undoubtedly be a great evil; yet if omitted, a greater evil might ensue; and when two evils presented themselves to view, it was of course proper to chuse the lesser; and therefore, according to the idea he had upon the subject, not pretending to be thoroughly well acquainted with it, he thought that the remedy which was now proposed must be adopted. But he could not help saying a few words upon this matter, because it appeared to him to be of vast importance. The honourable gentleman said, that the manufacturers and bankers in the country were well known in the neighbourhood in which they live, and therefore there could be no inconvenience in this measure with regard to the payment of the notes as they became due; but he thought the case was otherwise with regard to the capital, and therefore London, Westminster, and Southwark, were to be omitted in the bills, according to the honourable gentleman's intention at present. That there might be great difficulty and inconvenience in the extension of the bill, he had no doubt; for, most unhappily for this country, there must be great difficulty and inconvenience in the whole progress, and in every branch of this subject; but he did not know how it was possible to go on without making some provision in this respect for the capital as well as for the country; and here he hardly knew what to say; he was confounded when he looked at the pro-

bable consequences to which the measure which gave birth to these applications might lead. He knew not what provision was made, or could be made, for the payment of workmen, manufacturers, tradesmen or others, even for next Saturday night. He was sure, that if any measure was to be adopted upon the subject, not a moment ought to be lost. If a poor man was to be paid by a guinea note instead of a guinea, and no man would give him change for it without a discount of seven shillings, to what dreadful consequences might this not lead? What would a poor man do with his fourteen shillings instead of his guinea? What would the still poorer man do, whose whole weekly wages amounted to no more than fourteen shillings?—and, he believed, the average price of weekly labour was not higher. Indeed he apprehended the most dreadful consequence would soon ensue from these things; nor did he know how the evil was to be averted. He mentioned these things, that every man in the House should instantly turn his thoughts to the subject. It would be dreadful, indeed, if these notes, instead of money, should become *assignats*; and he feared it would be so.

Mr. JOLLIFFE also apprehended great danger upon this subject.

Mr. WILBERFORCE expressed a hope, that as this was a matter of experiment, it would not be of ill consequence. He hoped it would not be necessary to continue it long. For his own part, he thought that the temporary suspension of these bills would be attended with beneficial effects. In the issuing of small Bank notes, he thought there was great danger of forgery; but in the issuing of the notes proposed by this measure, there would be no such danger, because of their very quick return.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL gave an history of the two acts which were now proposed to be suspended, and thought, although the policy of these acts had been approved of for twenty years, and consequently some might think it imprudent to suspend that policy, yet he apprehended, that under all the circumstances, this measure might be safely adopted.

Mr. VANSITTART approved of the policy of these acts of Parliament, and wished that the experiment of the notes might be tried before the acts were suspended.

Mr. Chancellor PITT was inclined to think that the suspension of these acts should be tried for a limited time, but was by no means clear that the suspension ought to be confined to the class of persons or places which were specified in the motion. He thought the effects of the suspension might be beneficial to London, West-

minster and Southwark. He should therefore wish that the leave to bring in the bill should be larger than the motion asked. The bill afterwards might be modified as circumstances should require, and therefore he moved as an amendment, "That the exception should be left out."

Mr. WILBERFORCE BIRD readily assented to the proposed amendment.

Mr. FOX said, he had no objection to the amendment. He thought that the order for bringing in the bill should be as wide as possible, in order that afterwards the provisions of it might be regulated as it should appear to be necessary. But he could not help observing, that in contemplating the evil which was now only beginning to be felt, it was impossible to foresee to what inconveniences and distresses it might lead, or to what measures Parliament might be driven. He foresaw, however, great inconveniences in issuing these bills, particularly in the metropolis, where the multiplicity of business was so great; He feared there would be much confusion in consequence of this. He deplored the ignorance of the lower classes of working people. He felt how difficult it was to make them understand any provision of such an act of Parliament as this. He lamented that such a mass of people should be unable to read the accounts of the debates of the House. He feared that great advantages would be taken of the ignorance of this multitude of persons, and great fraud and mischief would ensue. He said this rather to call on gentlemen to try whether any other and better remedy could not be found than that which was now proposed, and it was with the view of something else being done that he agreed to the amendment, because it made the leave of the House larger as to what might be hereafter proposed.

The motion was then put in the following form: "That leave be given to bring in a bill to suspend, for a time to be limited, the operation of the said acts." Granted.

Mr. COKE (of Norfolk) said, he could not sit in that House and observe that such a motion as this was made, without alluding to the conduct of Ministers. He thought it criminal in Ministers to neglect giving to all manufacturing towns proper notice of the necessity that had given rise to the measures which the Parliament was now pursuing. He felt, as he thought every honest man should feel, upon the conduct of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He indeed had found no reason to approve of any part of his general political conduct since the year 1784, nor of those who had lately leagued with him, but who were formerly among the warmest of his opponents. That, however, was foreign to the mat-

ter which was now before the House, and therefore he would not pursue it. He complained now of the criminal negligence of the Minister, the mischief of which was incalculable. He could not help observing to the House what he knew and felt respecting the situation of Norwich. A proclamation, with which we were all now too well acquainted, came out on Monday morning at ten o'clock, by which all the specie in the Bank was stopp'd. Now he wished to know how the manufacturers and bankers of Norwich were to provide on Saturday night for the payment of all these sums which have always hitherto been paid in cash. It was stated, and he hoped truly, that this distress will be of short duration, for he could have no wishes that had not for their object the prosperity of this country: but wishes were of no avail against calamity. He desired to know where and how the bankers and manufacturers of that great city were to have a guinea to pay those demands that had always hitherto been paid in cash? What he complained of was, that the Minister did not communicate to Norwich his intention of bringing forward the measure which was now before Parliament. The evils to which that town was exposed, as well as he would dare say many other places knew, were such as to lead to mischief, the extent of which no human being could foresee, but which every good man must view with the deepest regret and apprehension.

Mr. W. SMITH said, that every word that had yet been uttered upon this subject shewed the propriety of a full investigation into the causes of the calamity, which not only threatened this country, but which it now began to feel. He rose now to allude to a point which had just been mentioned. He held in his hand a letter from the Bank at Bath, by which it appeared that they had come to a resolution to suspend payment in specie until Parliament shall have made provision upon the matter. But the letter farther stated, that they would be utterly incapable of adhering to that resolution; for it stated, that if they do not part with specie on Saturday next, the labourers cannot be paid. The conclusion of the sentence in the letter was in these words "But, my good friend, we must part with our specie, or the labourers cannot be paid; they will not take paper." In what manner, he would ask, could they be paid? The letter was not an angry one; it was written with good sense, and as good temper as any letter could be written under such circumstances; but it appeared plainly by that letter, that they must part with their specie, or throw the country around them into the utmost confusion. What measure was to be taken he did not know. He mentioned this for the information of the House. The same evil that existed at Bath, he was persuaded,

existed at Norwich, as well as at many other places. This matter called for the best consideration which the House could give it, and could never be provided for before a strict inquiry should be had upon the causes which have led to this alarming evil. He understood that it was for the very purpose of being able to pay the colliers and manufacturers in specie that the Newcastle bank stopped. The measure which was now before the House would prevent even that. The consequence of all this he was afraid to think of.

Mr. Chancellor PITT moved the order of the day upon the bill to suspend the law for preventing the Bank issuing notes under 5l. which was, that it be read a second time.

Mr. GREY observed, that these bills under 5l. were to be payable to bearer on demand.

The SPEAKER observed, that these words were not in the Breviate.

Mr. GREY said that the bills were to be payable to bearer on demand. Now he wished to know how a contradiction that must appear in the proceedings of the House was to be reconciled; for by the bill now before the House these notes were to be payable on demand; whereas the other regulation called upon the Bank not to pay any specie whatever until Parliament shall make further provision.

Mr. Chancellor PITT stated, it was natural to think that the words in the new notes should be the same as in all other notes.

Mr. FOX wished the House only to consider how, in addition to the general breach of faith, they were adding fresh difficulties. An order of Council, confessedly not binding, had been issued to the Bank not to pay any more cash; that order had not yet been confirmed. In the mean time a bill had been brought in to enable the Bank to issue notes under 5l. It was probable that this bill would be passed first. What then would be the state of the individual? He would read the present act; he would say, "I have not only the security of the Bank, but a recent act which empowers the Bank to issue notes payable on demand." The note is issued; he proceeds to the Bank; they refuse to pay him in specie; he brings his action, in which he must succeed, unless another act comes retrospective and retroactive in its operation. I have, therefore, on the 2d of March the faith of Parliament superadded to that of the Bank, to pay me the note, and a few days afterwards comes an act forbidding them to pay it. But it has been said, that this evil is less than the altering the form of the words of the note. This may be an inconvenience, but it is not so great a one as that of making the Bank issue a note upon a direct falsehood. On which

side the balance is I know not, but I think it right to submit whether a bill, under another form of words, ought not to be issued?

Mr. BRAGGE said, that the object of the measure was to create a circulating medium. The objection that had been advanced he considered to be minute, critical, and technical. What sort of notes were the Bank to issue, except in the technical form?

Mr. FOX asked if it was a minute thing, whether the Parliament and Bank should hold out what they could not perform? Was that merely minute, critical, and formal, which in morals was deemed most essential and solid?

Mr. BRAGGE said a few words in reply.

Mr. SHERIDAN, after a few observations upon what had fallen from Mr. Bragge, noted the inconsistency and disgraceful tendency of passing one bill to authorize the Bank to issue notes payable on demand, and another bill to prevent them from paying in specie. It was, he contended, extremely discreditable that the Speaker should hold in his hand a motion for passing a bill of such a nature as the first to which he had alluded, while such a bill lay upon the table as the second. The honourable gentleman who had spoken last considered the objection as merely critical; for his own part he considered it as highly discreditable. He thought that the payment of the bills should be fixed at a stated period, when the restrictions should be at an end. This would be fair and open; a discount might take place upon the bill, but the discount would be known.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL said, that the House were in a state of difficulty, and it was necessary to consider what was best to be done. Upon the idea suggested by Mr. Bird, the manufacturer would not be compelled to take notes, and he might insist on having cash. The House proceeded upon the principle that the labourer would be content to take the notes. The idea certainly was, that though an act might be passed, enabling the manufacturer to pay his workmen in notes, yet that the workmen were not forced to take these notes, if they did not chuse it. Every body who took them, would take them under knowledge of the circumstances under which they were issued. The question therefore was, whether the measure should be adopted at all, or modified. Some gentlemen proposed, that the notes should be issued payable on demand; others wished to leave out those words. For his own part, he conceived no fraud would be practised upon the public by using the former mode, because the notes would be issued under circumstances with which all persons would be acquainted.

After a few words from Mr. BIRD, the bill was read a second time.

The House then resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House upon the bill.

In the Committee the bill was gone through, and some amendments made.

The report was brought up, received, and read ; after which,

Mr. Chancellor PITT suggested to the House, whether it would be desirable to wait till to-morrow with a view to receive any farther instructions, or whether they should this night proceed to the third reading of the bill for the sake of dispatch.

Mr. TIERNEY proposed a question, whether, if he should go to a shop to buy goods to the amount of five shillings, and offer one of these twenty-shilling notes, he should be put in such a situation as to receive the goods and fifteen shillings in change? On the answer the right honourable gentleman should make to this question would depend whether he should be induced to take the notes ; if the notes were not placed on this footing, and some substantial fund provided for the purpose, they could only tend to produce disputes between him and his tradesmen, and to afford an opportunity for a most pernicious species of jobbing and speculation.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that it was his wish to give the utmost facility to these measures, which had been taken from the pressure of unavoidable necessity. But it would be recollected that the only point in debate had arisen from the circumstance, that these notes would fall under the same prohibition with respect to the issue of specie, which at present applied to notes already in circulation. Whether it might be expedient to admit any qualifications to this prohibition in particular cases would be matter of future discussion. In the mean time all the notes would rest on the same footing—the strong conviction entertained of the validity of the body by whom they were issued.

Mr. TIERNEY thanked the Minister for his information, that he should not be able to get twenty shillings for a twenty-shilling note.

Mr. Chancellor PITT begged that his information might rest upon the terms of his own explanation, and not upon any comment of the honourable gentleman.

Mr. FOX said, that he would not oppose this bill, but reserve to himself, whether he would afterwards give his vote for repealing or confirming the order of council, prohibiting the Bank to issue specie. His honourable friend asked, where he should get change for his twenty-shilling note ; he had no hesitation to answer, at the Bank, otherwise the Directors were liable to an action for the amount. But he should at present wave this discussion, as he did

not conceive that the question belonged to the present stage of the business.

The order of the day being read for a "motion for inquiry into the causes of the Order of Council prohibiting the Bank to issue specie,"

Mr. FOX said: In rising to make a motion for inquiry, in pursuance of a notice I gave last night, I do assure the House, that any person who thinks me disposed to indulge in petty cavils, or to enter into minute and verbal criticisms, is very ignorant of the state of my mind on the present occasion. I feel that the present crisis is the most important that ever occurred in the history of this country; and, I solemnly declare, that my opinion, with respect to the chance of the future prosperity of this island, is more changed within these forty-eight hours than I could possibly have conceived at any former period. If there is any man, who at this moment is disposed to indulge in petty cavils, or enter into verbal criticisms on the state of affairs, he must feel but little regard for the welfare of the country, or must feel less seriously than I do, with respect to the situation of calamity into which we have fallen. So strong is the impression on my mind, that I, on the contrary, am apprehensive, lest I should be tedious to the House, from the serious tone I feel myself compelled to assume, and my anxiety to impress upon those who hear me, the magnitude of the crisis, and the importance of the duty they are called to discharge to the country. The principal object of debate hitherto has been, how far we ought to enter into an inquiry respecting the circumstances which refer to this new situation of affairs? A motion for the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry has been made and adopted. To this motion I only objected, that it did not make provision, that the powers of this Committee should be sufficiently widely extended to meet all those objects of inquiry which the necessity of the time suggested. I shall very likely again be told, that I am getting into verbal criticisms; but this is not a moment at which I should feel myself justified to decline any duty, in order to avoid any petty objections. The object of the Committee, which has been moved for, besides inquiring into the state of the Bank, which I put out of the question, is to examine into the necessity of confirming and continuing the Order of Council. I conceive the duty assigned to this Committee to be far too narrow; they are not empowered to inquire into the causes which produced the necessity, nor even into the actual existence of the necessity, on which the Order of Council is said to have been founded, but only into the necessity of confirming and continuing that Order. Now there may be some who are of opinion, that no previous ne-

cessity existed to justify the publication of that Order. But, after the Order has been issued, however rashly or improvidently, it may have become matter of absolute necessity to continue and confirm it: in consequence of the measure adopted by Council, the situation of things may now be such, that even before we examine into the necessity that produced the Order, it may be dangerous to suspend its operation. There were many gentlemen who were last night of opinion, that the consideration of the existing necessity was so entirely separate from the investigation of the causes that had produced it, and of so much greater urgency, that it ought to be allowed the preference with respect to priority of discussion. I can by no means agree that these are two objects of consideration entirely separate; but it was not attempted to be denied by any gentleman, that it was the duty of this House to inquire into the causes that produced the necessity. On the contrary, it was generally felt to be an indispensable duty to undertake this inquiry, and it is only necessary for me to refer to the unanimous resolution passed for this purpose; but though there are none who deny the propriety of investigation, there are some who possibly may object to the fitness of the time at which it is attempted to be brought forward. The more I have turned my mind to consider the point, the more firmly am I convinced that an inquiry, such as I now propose, cannot be delayed without danger. But if it be the opinion of the Committee that the Order of Council should be confirmed and continued, and the necessity for this resolution has arisen merely from the fact that such an Order has been issued, then might we hope that this unprecedented situation of calamity might be of shorter continuance; but if the Order of Council was called for by the exigence of the day; if it has, indeed, arisen from the pressure of strong and irresistible circumstances; so long as we remain ignorant of the causes which have led to this dreadful situation, we can only apply temporary palliatives for the evil, and by no means adopt any proper or efficient remedy for the embarrassed state of the country. If it has arisen from the improvidence of financial arrangements, and from an enormous and unprincipled system of public expenditure, then the remedy is certain; but if, on the other hand, what I most sincerely deprecate, (for it is better that individuals should be guilty, than that the country should be ruined,) it had, indeed, arisen from a real state of financial and commercial embarrassment, which, from unavoidable causes, has been progressively going on, and has now arrived at that desperate pitch, that the measure adopted by the Council could no longer be deferred; then, though the prospect will be melancholy for the country, individuals must be acquitted from any

share of criminality. In this latter case, it will be incumbent upon the country to consider the whole state of its policy, to review the system which has been pursued for many years, and to adopt a very different system for its future proceedings: it will then be necessary that the whole conduct of this House, and the whole principle of legislation, should assume a different form. If this unexampled distress has proceeded from neglect or abuse, from the carelessness of those who should have guarded against encroachment, and the criminality of those at the head of affairs, we must then for a remedy recur to our former principles, and endeavour to restore the vigilant policy and the pure administration of former periods; but if this calamity arises from the magnitude of the national debt, and from the rapid degree in which it has increased above the means of the country, we must then adopt a principle of conduct accommodated to this new situation in our affairs. These are questions that do not admit of delay; they call for immediate and serious discussion: such is my conviction of the importance of the crisis, that I am persuaded that, by the measures that shall be adopted within these three weeks, the fate of the country must be decided. In one case, it will only be necessary to reform those abuses which have been suffered to creep in by neglect, till they have produced this enormous degree of mischief. In the other, it will be necessary to resort to a new system, and to make provision for an evil of such magnitude, as it is scarcely possible to contemplate with equanimity. In either case it is important to institute an immediate inquiry, in order that we may be qualified to judge of our situation, and adopt measures suitable to the crisis. It is now my intention to move for a Committee of Inquiry for the purposes I have mentioned. Probably a Committee of the whole House will not, in this instance, be deemed the most eligible. In my opinion, indeed, the more public the inquiry, the better will it answer the object for which it is intended. But there are, perhaps, some circumstances connected with the investigation, which might not be deemed proper to be generally divulged. I do not, however, mean to propose that the Committee shall be chosen by ballot, but that the Members who shall be appointed to compose it be named to this House. There are certainly several instances of Committees having been chosen nominally on similar occasions. But, in the present instance, I do not rest on the authority of a few precedents, but on a circumstance which appears to me to carry some weight, with a view to the investigation I have now proposed. An opinion has certainly gone abroad in the country, that a great majority of the House of Commons repose an unlimited confidence in the present Ministers. I do not say

that such a suspicion is well founded, but it is undoubtedly generally prevalent. Now if such be the surmise that a great majority of this House have so strong a partiality for Ministers, and shew an uniform disposition to delegate to them their duties and their conscience, in order to counteract this suspicion, it is better that the Members of the Committee shall be openly named in the House, than appointed by the influence of ballot. If it be thought necessary, let it be debated whether the Members who are named are proper persons to sit on the Committee. A point of this sort has been debated in a former instance, and has even occasioned a division. If it be the opinion of Ministers that their friends only should be members of the Committee, let them express that opinion by vote, and not regulate the appointment by the influence of ballot. We shall then be able to judge from the proceedings in this House, and according to the names that we shall find to be adopted or rejected, what expectation we may form from the decision of the Committee. Mr. Fox then moved, "That a Committee be appointed to inquire into the causes which have produced the Order of Council."

General WALPOLE rose to second the motion. The best way, in his opinion, to restore the public credit, was to give confidence to the people, which could only be by a removal of those Ministers, whose ruinous and ill-concerted schemes had been the cause of the present embarrassments. The Order in the Council was said to have been issued upon the exigencies created by an extravagant and ill-founded alarm. It was of importance to inquire, then, who were the authors of this alarm, and this would require but little research to ascertain; for who did not know that it had been created by Ministers themselves? He recollected, though he was not present at the debate, that when the Chancellor of the Exchequer came to the House demanding additional aid to the Emperor, he stated that he had positive information that the enemy meditated an invasion of some part of His Majesty's dominions. What was still more strange, this proclamation, issued upon an occasion to which alarm had given rise, was signed by the greatest alarmists in the kingdom, the Lord Chancellor, the Secretary of State, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Fitzwilliam—No; he asked his pardon; Lord Fitzwilliam alone had acted consistently with his principles. Neither did he see the name of his right honourable friend, the Secretary at War; and he believed that he had kept back because he was ashamed of its contents. He hoped that this was but a prelude to his right honourable friend again coming over to that side of the House, which, when he did, he should set as high a value

upon his political, as he now did upon his private friendship. There was one argument for the Committee proposed by Mr. Fox which appeared to him to be unanswerable ; it was, that in the transaction there were two parties, the Bank and Administration. It was agreed on all hands that no blame attached to the Bank ; it followed of course, therefore, that it must lie with the Ministers. Upon this ground, as well as upon those which had been so ably stated by Mr. Fox, he seconded the motion for a Committee.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, in the view which he should take of this question, it would not be necessary to go into the topics urged by the brave and gallant Officer who seconded the motion. What he had said did not appear to him to be relevant to the question, or much connected with the matter in discussion. One argument used by the honourable General seemed to him extremely singular, and no less so the consequences which he deduced from it. The honourable General seemed very much surprized that any of those Members who professed themselves alarmed when they conceived the Country and its Constitution in danger, should ever afterwards sign any complaint of an ill-founded alarm. It had been fashionable to call certain gentlemen " Alarmists," and these gentlemen were supposed to have acted upon a groundless alarm : in this view of the matter, there might be some ground for the honourable General's surprize. But, surely, if gentlemen once had conceived there were grounds of serious apprehension, and had acted in consequence of such conviction, it did not follow that they were not to complain when they thought they saw an unfounded and exaggerated alarm prevailing. It was the first time he ever heard that they were to forfeit all title to provide against alarm which was ill-founded, because they had before conceived there did exist a good ground of apprehension. The inconsistency of such conduct was not apparent to him.

The right honourable gentleman had supposed the alarm must be ill-founded, because he, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had said that there was reason for apprehension ; was not this the fact ? He had stated to the House that there were reasons to apprehend the enemy would attempt to invade some part of the kingdom ; what part, he did not profess to know : and farther stated, that he believed, by exertions, we were fully capable of resisting with effect any such attempt, should they be capable of making it. He had also, in common with his colleagues, endeavoured to stimulate the country to those exertions which would give it security, and take away all cause of alarm. But did it follow, that while they were making exertions against alarm, well founded, they were not to

take any precaution against any degree of alarm, however ill-founded? This was the ground upon which they were charged with inconsistency.

With regard to the question proposed by the motion itself, the difference of opinion was more in the time and mode of adopting the measure, than in the thing itself. He did not rise so much to object to the propriety of a general inquiry, as he did to combat the idea of a necessity of enlarging the powers of the Committee, on the notion that they were not empowered to inquire into the causes which produced the necessity. He begged distinctly to disclaim any such idea. He appeared to the House, whether in what fell from him yesterday, he did not as distinctly disclaim it. If the House would recollect, every part of his argument went to state a necessity for inquiring into the causes, as well for taking the measure, as into the propriety of its continuance. He only urged the necessity of the first point in priority of time, that they might proceed immediately to that object, which could not safely be delayed while they gave the necessary investigation to the other parts. The duty attached to that Committee he conceived to embrace both objects of inquiry, and what was now proposed by the right honourable gentleman was a part of their duty; therefore, if another Committee were appointed, there would be one Committee examining the propriety of continuing the measure of the Privy Council, and another for the examination of the causes producing the necessity of the measure. In his opinion, the whole ought to be the province of the same Committee. As to the causes producing the necessity, he thought the question, upon that point, would fall much more naturally within the province of the same Committee who had investigated the propriety of the order, upon the examination of the Bank affairs. When they had done that, the next point in the order of time was, the more minute investigation of the remote causes. This would be done from all the variety of sources containing the authorities, either from the offices of Executive Government, or otherwise.

If by the appointment of a Committee, as proposed by the right honourable gentleman, no possible time could be gained, he did not see any reason why it should not be referred to the same Committee. He saw no reason why one Committee should be appointed to consider one part of the subject, and another another; or that because one Committee had gone through an inquiry upon one part of the subject, they had therefore disqualified themselves to judge of the remainder. The scrutineers had not returned the names of the Committee which they had balloted for; but they had appeared

to the House worthy of having an important and solemn trust reposed in them ; and unless they proved, by their conduct, that they were not deserving of that confidence, he was at a loss to conceive what objection could be made to entrusting them with the whole inquiry. Gentlemen seemed particularly anxious about this part of the subject, and indeed it appeared the only part upon which there was any difference of opinion. But it was difficult to discuss it, consistently with the order of the House. The custom of choosing Secret Committees by ballot was a measure frequently resorted to by our ancestors, and formerly had been acted upon with very few exceptions, though he admitted that, in latter times, there had been some exceptions. It was perfectly well known, that there always had existed party differences in that House, and obvious reasons must immediately suggest themselves to gentlemen to justify the practice which had formerly been established. He really felt himself at a loss how to argue this part of the question ; but he would appeal to the House, at least to those who were disposed to judge candidly of what he said, whether he was not correct in what he had said. It appeared to him not to be the most proper mode of appointing a Committee, to mention gentlemen individually by name, and to have debates upon the propriety of every individual being appointed—this must lead to discussions of a nature that the House, he was sure, would wish to avoid, and that would not be consistent with the dignity of their character. But then the right honourable gentleman asked, “ Are all the persons who are to be appointed, to be gentlemen in the habits of voting with Administration ? ” He had before stated the difficulty of speaking upon this subject ; but certainly there might be persons whose sense of public duty led them to suppose that the views of one set of men were better, and, consequently, more deserving of support, than the views and objects of another. Persons certainly entertained particular attachments to different parties, and might, in so doing, act conscientiously. Gentlemen might entertain systematic opinions, that the safety of the country depended upon its affairs being conducted by one set of men, and, in consequence of that opinion, might give them systematic support ; but it did not from thence follow, that they had given up the power of judging for themselves. There were gentlemen who as systematically thought ill of Administration, and as systematically opposed them ; he admitted the latter might act fairly, and hoped it was not too much to say, that the former might do so too. The Minority might entertain unfavourable opinions of the Majority, and certainly the Majority had a right to entertain as bad opinions of them. When questions of

inquiry arose, there might be differences of opinion as to the mode of effecting it. . He saw no reason why the inquiry should be exclusive ; but, on the other hand, he saw no reason why those who were in opposition to the measure, should have more weight in the Committee than those who were on the other side.

Was it objectionable in a Committee, that it was probable that, generally speaking, they would be of one way of thinking ? He saw no reason why the Minority had any right to set up views of party against a Majority, or to suppose that the Public had not, at least, as good an opinion of the latter as they had of the former. He was not aware that the mode of chusing a Committee by ballot was unfair ; but he certainly could never give his consent to the appointment of a new Committee, merely for the purpose of canvassing names in the House. He did not imagine gentlemen would think of proposing to chuse a Committee, as parties do arbitrators and referees ; and particularly where it was necessary that the arbitrators on both sides should be equal. He had thought it necessary to say thus much upon this proposal, to which he certainly could not give his assent. As to the inquiry itself, it was a matter of indifference to him at what time the Committee was appointed ; it seemed to him to be a matter of no consequence ; but he thought it would be advantageous that the other inquiry should be finished first ; when that was accomplished, he saw no objection to the inquiry now proposed ; but he did see objection to its being determined on how ; and he saw much objection to the manner in which it was proposed to appoint the Committee : therefore, if the House felt as he did, they would object to the appointment of the Committee as now proposed ; but not to the inquiry, or to its being conducted by the Committee now appointed.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that the mode of inquiry which the Chancellor of the Exchequer now proposed, was precisely that which was suggested by the amendment which he had moved, and which was rejected last night. The right honourable gentleman had asserted the dignity of the House with much warmth ; and here he was permitted to retort upon him ; but his speech was so barren of argument, that it need only be repeated to appear ridiculous. Mr. Sheridan admitted, that the mode of appointing Committees by ballot was a good one at first, but it was now become one of those good rules and good practices, which are so often converted into masks of imposture and abuse. The right honourable gentleman affected to treat a public canvas for a Committee as absurd and indecent. But he might have recollected, that he himself had recourse to that absurd and indecent mode of appointing a Com-

mittee at a very critical period (the time of the Regency). He would now ask him, why at that time he gave into such absurdity, and induced the House to act in a manner so unbecoming its dignity? It was because at that time he knew the case to be delicate and nice, and that the country would not have been satisfied with a balloted Committee, which they knew to be a Jury packed by Ministers, to serve the purposes which they had in view. The right honourable gentleman asked, why they could object to a Committee whose names they did not know? What could the right honourable gentleman say if he should assert that their names were known, and that several Members, who got Treasury lists put into their hands at the door of the House, went away in disgust. He could not be permitted, by the forms of the House, positively to say who would be on the list of the Committee, but he should merely mention who, in his opinion, would be proper persons, and whose names, he would venture to predict, would appear on the list to be given in the course of an hour. If, however, that list agreed with his prediction, he presumed it would hardly be contended that he was such a prophet as to be able to tell the chances of a fair ballot. The names were very respectable, and it was necessary that they should be so, in order to give a colour to the business. Mr. Sheridan then read the names on his list as follows:

Sir John Scott—a very respectable name.

Isaac Hawkins Browne, Esq.—a very proper person.

Charles Bragge, Esq.—He will entertain the Committee with critical remarks.

John William Anderson, Esq.

John Pane, Esq.

Thomas Grenville, Esq.

William Wilberforce, Esq.

Charles Grey, Esq.—very proper indeed.

Sir John Mitford.

William Hussey, Esq.

W. Wilberforce Bird, Esq.

William Plumer, Esq.

Thomas Powys, Esq.

John Blackburne, Esq.

Thomas Berney Bramston, Esq.

All very respectable gentlemen!

He must observe, however, that in this list Ministers had not preserved the rules of proportion, for his side of the House were entitled to have five and a fraction. He did not charge the Chancellor of the Exchequer with making out the list himself. Here,

said Mr. Sheridan, I see the right honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Dundas) smile, as if he would say, "No, my right honourable friend, in the innocence of his heart, never suspected such a thing; but there are plenty around perfectly competent to the task." With respect to the question itself, he was perfectly indifferent whether an inquiry was instituted or not, if another Committee was not appointed. An honourable General had endeavoured to account for the Secretary at War not signing the Order of Council; he believed that it proceeded from the reflections it contained against the alarmists; for he was so rooted an alarmist himself, that he was sure he could not believe that any of his tribe could act in a manner worthy of reprehension. He begged pardon of the House for being jocular on so grave a subject; but even amidst the wreck of public credit, and on the brink of the country's ruin, it was impossible not to laugh at the juggling tricks and miserable shifts to which Ministers had recourse to screen themselves from punishment.

The SECRETARY AT WAR said, that, upon the present occasion, the honourable gentleman, who had just sat down, had resorted to that expedient which it was his custom on all questions to introduce, that artifice which he so frequently displayed in order to disparage and to degrade the House, he now attempted to reconcile to his purposes. The object he had in view, however, was too obvious to escape detection. He eagerly seized upon practices which, in reality, required no disguise, because they contained nothing improper; he assumed, that corruption was the motive which must produce every measure; he took the guilt for granted, and then sought the matter of fact, in order to prove that the House was corrupt, and to reduce Parliament in the estimation of the public. He thinks he has proved his case, when he has shown that the men who are to form the Committee are influenced by the opinions of those with whom they have been accustomed to act. Such representations as these, however, could not pass with any man of understanding. What foppery was it to adduce this as a charge of corruption, when it was so well known that the same thing prevailed upon the other side! Why were not the opinions of those whose conduct they generally approved to have the same weight with Members upon this side of the House as well as upon the other? The cant of superior purity, and the charge of corruption, was the manner in which the Minority had commonly thought proper to revenge themselves on the Majority. This was the cant by which they endeavoured to impose upon the public. The same charge might be imputed to those who composed the Minority, because they were guided by the direction of the right honourable gentle-

man opposite (Mr. Fox), a circumstance which he did not state as a reproach. Must, then, the smaller number arrogate to themselves the most perfect rectitude, and charge the Majority with the very worst intentions? Surely it was a good modest pretension this. In fact, the charge of corruption against such a body as the House of Commons, was in itself absurd and ridiculous. The number who could be supposed to act merely from their interest must be very few. Does the House of Commons differ from the country at large in this respect? In places where influence could be less felt, the same character prevailed. Yet, take the majority of any extensive society in different parts, take them in the city of London, and the same charge might be brought against their purity: It had sometimes been used as an argument to prove the corruption of the House, that Members who were monied men became subscribers to public loans, doing that which no law prohibited, and what, though they had not been Members of the House, they would have done. By such representations as these was the character of Parliament vilified, and its independence arraigned. With regard to what had fallen from his honourable friend (General Walpole), he could not reply, as he could not, like his right honourable friend, so readily overcome the difficulty of answering what he had not heard. Various reasons were assigned for his name not appearing at the Order of Council, to which it would not be expected that he should reply. Because he had once seen danger, was he always to be afraid; and because he had once been, upon good grounds, alarmed, was he to feel alarm upon every occasion, however exaggerated it might be? It was said, that this side of the House had now come into the measures of the other; but as their proposals last night were so inconsistent and so opposite, it was almost impossible that in shunning one extreme they should not fall into another.

Mr. GREY said his honourable friend had been accused by the Secretary at war of vilifying the House of Commons, and degrading it in public estimation. He wished, however, that the right honourable gentleman, when he professed himself so anxious for the dignity and reputation of the House of Commons, would attend to the qualities which were calculated to render it respectable, and to justify its claim to veneration. The right honourable gentleman held it to be useful that the mode of ballot should be so conducted as to be formed by ministerial influence. He conceived it to be no disgrace to receive instruction from Administration with regard to the names to be given in the lists, in a situation of public affairs like the present, amidst the unfortunate events with which we were surrounded, and considering the measures of Ministers as the causes

to which they were to be ascribed, when we viewed the unparalleled distress into which this country was plunged, Ministers, upon the face of things, were charged with blame, and if the investigation of so serious a point was to be intrusted to a Committee, formed in such a manner, it was not by the charge of his honourable friend but by their own conduct, that the House would be degraded. But it was said that this was the common cant of minorities, and that opposition themselves would act in the same manner were they placed in the same situation. But if upon this side of the question they were desirous to have influence with those who thought favourably of their principles, they would do it not by stealth but openly. If influenced, the public would then see how the Committee was constituted, and might judge of its character. They complained not that influence would produce its weight, that in circumstances so momentous as the present, it was to be lamented that it existed; but they complained that the House of Commons should display such readiness to confide. Indeed it was more surprising that amidst the difficulties which his misconduct had occasioned, the Minister could even venture to come forward and ask for confidence; but it was more melancholy that Parliament should accede to the demand. What was worst, too, in this mode of constituting the Committee, was, that it pretended to be fair, while it only had the effect to delude. The farce of a ballot ought at least to be laid aside, that the public might be able to judge of the openness of the proceedings, of the purity they should have expected. It was indeed not a little singular for the right honourable Secretary at War to object so contemptuously that it was the common cant of minorities to charge the majority with corruption. He would tell the right honourable gentleman, however, that he proved the cry to be false and deceitful. When those who were most loud against abuses, and most forward to arraign corruption, became their abettors and defenders; when the right honourable gentleman, who had opposed so strenuously the measures of the present Minister, who had spurned his "dirty filth and deception," contracted an intimate alliance with him, supported and excused his corruptions; then he would dispute the sincerity of those who used the language, and pursued the conduct which the right honourable gentleman had stigmatized. Such arts might be employed to mislead the people, but what could be thought of the virtuous man who endeavoured to destroy all confidence in professions? A general charge against those who ventured to expose corruption. With regard to himself, he would say, and he wished his words to be remembered, should he ever attempt to deviate from his

ciples; that with the corruptions of the present Government he would hold no communion, and if he thought his right honourable friend, (Mr. Fox) in office, capable of maintaining the abuses at present prevailing, he would no longer afford him his support. There was no salvation for the country but a complete investigation of the causes by which we were reduced to our present situation. There could be no renovation of public credit without a removal of the causes which had affected its destruction. To accomplish these objects, the most exact economy and the most extensive retrenchments were required. The influence of the Crown must be diminished; places which were not essential to the purposes of Government must be abolished; and above all, and without which, nothing could be effectual, a reform in the representation must be introduced. He knew the use which would be made of this declaration; but he was not afraid to utter his sentiments, nor was he concerned for the consequences which might be drawn from his candour. Till he had by his own deed forfeited his claim to confidence by a dereliction of his principles, he was entitled to the credit of sincerity. It was said by the right honourable gentleman, was it not natural that those who had systematically supported the measures of Administration, had given them confidence, should feel the influence which this circumstance would produce? He would say, on the contrary, that it was unnatural and monstrous that they should feel this influence in favour of the Minister. If public affairs had continued to move in a course of glory and prosperity, if credit had remained unimpaired, if the Bank of England had not stopped payment, and Government committed an act of bankruptcy, then they might have given without a blush their support to the Minister. But after he had led us from one disaster to another, to the very brink of ruin, could he call for, could he expect our confidence? Ministers stood arraigned as having destroyed the public prosperity. They might obtain an acquittal; but it was right, it was decent, that the tribunal should be so constituted as to give weight to a sentence of acquittal. For this purpose, then, ballot was not the mode of proceeding. The necessity of an inquiry was not denied. The right honourable gentleman, defeated last night by the resolution of the House, had now found that, though the inquiries were separate, they might be referred to the same Committee; though last night he had denied equally the connection between the subjects and the possibility of referring them to one Committee. But in his opinion the best way would be to refer the consideration of the first point to one Committee, and the investigation of the causes to another, for there was nothing to pro-

vent them from proceeding at the same time without inconvenience. Upon the measures adopted for the next three weeks, the prosperity, nay the existence, of the country depended. How could they expect to retrieve our situation without investigating the causes of the disorder? The necessity of a speedy and thorough inquiry was then most urgent. His honourable friend had justly complained, that those who were so eager to propagate alarms should be offended that they were exaggerated. Such had been the system of Ministers every session for some time past, and such extravagant and groundless alarm had been the foundation of some oppressive measures. At the beginning of the present session, the speech from the throne announced the alarm of invasion; Ministers held forth the dangers as threatening, and then passed the troublesome and oppressive acts which were intended to put the country in a state of defence. They propagated the alarm with activity, till at length the actual attempt had excited a real alarm and uneasiness. The alarm raised by Ministers had taken an unfortunate direction, and became too serious. While it was only meant to induce the people to throw themselves more implicitly upon the present Administration, it had turned the attention of the people to a consideration of their safety, which produced a distrust of Government. Feeling therefore, as he did, the importance and the urgency of our present situation, he should vote for a separate Committee to investigate, to their remotest sources, the causes which had produced the act of Council.

Mr. WILBERFORCE rose to vindicate the dignity and consistency of the majority of the House, from the aspersions thrown out against them by gentlemen who were in favour of the motion. They had, indeed, mixed ridicule with declamation to attain their purpose; but he would ask, what force could such aspersions have, coming from gentlemen who had changed from day to day, from month to month, and from year to year? It certainly came with an ill grace from them to charge the House with corruption; they who on all occasions abused the last Parliament, and gave the present one pretty strong reasons to judge what report it might hereafter receive from them. If Government, as was reported, had actually offered the lists of Members proper to be balloted for, and gentlemen, in consequence of that measure, either approved of or altered them, was not that proceeding right? He had altered the one presented to himself, and had thus exercised his right, and followed his duty, not with a slavish acquiescence, but with his own discretion and judgement. Such a charge was peculiarly ill timed, and came very awkwardly from the gentlemen opposite, who had then lists passing between them expressly to the same in-

tent. He did not perfectly agree with both sides on the object of the motion, but he would say that it became the country to inquire what retrenchments and savings might be made; and no person, he was convinced, would rejoice more at such a proceeding than the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The opinion of the public was held out as against the sense of the majority of the House, though the fact was directly opposite. He recollected that such arguments were applied to him in 1783, and 84, in 90, and 96, yet when he returned to his constituents, instead of finding the sentiments of the people against him, the absolute reverse was manifest. In the actual state of the country and of the world, it was impossible not to be exposed to some evils, notwithstanding the utmost wisdom of any Administration. But from the very outset of the war, much of the public calamity was owing to the conduct of opposition, and to the conduct of those who had proceeded to lengths which the opposition would not avow.

Mr. CURWEN said, that those who arraigned others of inconsistency and corruption, should look to their own conduct, and not get up as volunteers to accuse others, while they themselves were liable to the same accusations. Had a list been brought to him, in order to influence or direct his choice in nominating a Committee, he should regard it as an insult, and think himself unworthy of his situation, if he listened to any influence but his own judgement. The cause we had now to support, called for and required the united exertions of every man in the House and in the nation; and the aspect of the times was such, that he, for one, felt himself compelled to support the Minister, not from any approbation of his political principles and conduct, which he never could approve, but because nothing else was now left to be done by any gentleman who had a stake in the country. He was the last man whom his judgement would prompt him to support; but from his love for his country, and for what remained of its Constitution, he would not embarrass him. His situation now was such, that the people could no longer place any confidence in him, from the oppressiveness of his measures, and the multiplied burdens with which he wantonly loaded them. He was unable to guide the affairs of the nation, especially in these trying times; and this Mr. Curwen affirmed to be his most conscientious opinion. The repeated alarms he had spread through the country, had damped its spirit and clouded its hopes; its energies were gone, and there remained no spring to give. His situation he looked on as by no means enviable; and had he (Mr. Curwen) the abilities and ambition of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt), he would not accept the situation

he how held under the feelings he must experience ; no : though for the endurance of such feelings, he were to have the fee simple of all his emoluments for life. Neither could he think that the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox), would at present aspire to that situation : if he did, he trusted that, contrary to the usual practice of Ministers, he would perform, when in power, the promises which he made while in opposition.

The present state of the country called for a man great enough to spurn and to destroy the means usually resorted to by Ministers ; a task which, he trusted, that right honourable gentleman would not shrink from. We ought no longer to deceive the country, but go fairly into an inquiry that may heal its wounds ; but that inquiry must be speedily instituted—if a moment be lost, it may be irretrievable, and we are lost for ever.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS spoke against the motion. He was of opinion that it would be extremely wrong to appoint a second Committee, during the sitting of that which the House had just appointed. After that Committee had made their report, if the House should then think it necessary to move an instruction to them, to inquire into the causes of the necessity of issuing the Order of Council, it might be done. If it was thought necessary to appoint another Committee for that purpose, then it would be time enough, at present he thought it extremely improper. He was also decidedly in favour of a ballot in preference to an open nomination.

Mr. SEWELL thought that the Committee should distinguish between the remote and immediate cause of the necessity of the Order of Council. He understood the right honourable gentleman was ready to accede to the present motion.

Mr. Chancellor PITT observed, that he had not expressed any readiness to accede to the motion, as the honourable gentleman seemed to understand him. Certainly not ! He merely stated his readiness to accede to the proposition, that the Committee should take the subject into consideration, though not in a distinct and separate manner.

Mr. SEWELL explained.

Mr. POLLEN rose and spoke as follows :

“ Mr. Speaker, I cannot but think it a most lamentable circumstance, that the very precious time of this House should be consumed in discussing, whether fifteen Members of its body possess abilities to examine, and virtue to determine, on circumstances which may come before them. Good God, Sir, shall it go out into the world, that after such names have been recited to us, as an honour-

able Member predicted would be the appointed Committee, any suspicion should attach to them? Nay, even an honourable gentleman, who has spoken with great energy from the floor, (Mr. Grey,) has not ventured to arraign their respectability. If, then, talents are not denied, and integrity not impeached, what other qualities would gentlemen wish to belong to a Committee? Now, Sir, I cannot but confess that my opinion (in which I may very easily be mistaken) is, that the right honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer has directly and diametrically differed from his conduct last night—but I do not pretend to inquire into the reasons of any man's alteration of opinion; suffice it that it is altered for the better—I do therefore, for myself and my constituents, most sincerely thank him for assenting to the “Inquiry into the causes of the Order of Council” being referred to the Committee already appointed, which is what I voted for last night. I am sure it will ease my mind, and, I trust, it will the minds of my constituents; and I repeat with pleasure, that I have no fear lest the result of that inquiry should not be honourable to His Majesty's Ministers, and the conduct of it creditable to the Committee.”

Lord HAWKESBURY declared, that he opposed the amendment moved the night before, from a conviction that it went to institute an inquiry into the remote, not the proximate causes of the Order of Council. He should vote against the motion, as two Committees were perfectly useless.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that it was not easy to define what were remote, and what proximate causes. This must be referred to the discretion of a Committee.

Mr. NICHOLLS said, he would trouble the House with a single observation. It had been stated by the Secretary at War, that when a Committee was to be elected by ballot, lists, containing the names of persons proper to be returned on that Committee had been usually distributed with the privy of the Minister; Mr. Nicholls said, he did not mean to examine whether that usage was proper or improper. But he desired the Minister to consider the situation in which he stood. He had advised His Majesty to issue an Order of Council, which the Attorney General had the preceding evening declared to be illegal: and, indeed, it would have been strange if the Attorney General had not declared it to be illegal; for by that Order of Council His Majesty's Minister had directed the Bank of England, acting as the agent of the nation, to pay the dividends to the national creditors in paper, not to pay those dividends which the Nation had contracted to pay. He was to justify this measure to the satisfaction of his Country. If he was unable

to give the Country satisfaction on this subject, he could not remain the Minister. He put it to the consideration of the Minister himself, whether the Country would be satisfied with an acquittal by a Committee nominated by the Minister himself?

Mr. WINDHAM remarked, that as lists had been circulated on both sides, objections of that nature ought to have little weight.

Doctor LAWRENCE began by observing, that he had endeavoured to chastise his own feelings, and subdue every prejudice and passion, before he ventured to look coolly and firmly at the awful state of the country. His chief object was to consider the present situation of affairs dispassionately, and in an unbiassed manner. With that view he came to the House, and he was happy to acknowledge that the way in which the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) had introduced the subject matter of his motion was fair, candid, and in no respect painful to his feelings: yet he could not avoid saying, that they were considerably affected by the violent declamation used by some gentlemen who followed him, and by the laughter which the remarks of an honourable gentleman had produced in discussing a topic which required peculiar delicacy and gravity, at a period so momentous to the public welfare. It appeared to him, that, after the Report of the Committee should be received, an inquiry might be properly made into the causes stated in the motion. But the necessity of such a proceeding was then, in no point of view whatever, of a pressing nature, and to pursue it to a great extent, when other important considerations called for the attention of the Committee, would be both dangerous and without utility. The gentlemen on the other side imputed sinister motives to Administration, and to the Majority of the House in the nomination of the Members of the Select Committee, yet at the same time they readily admitted that the Members named were all men of the greatest respectability. Since such was the effect of the corrupt motives which were attributed to Ministers, he was happy to declare that he would ever cherish that corruption which produced such valuable consequences. If so gross a practice of villifying the integrity and dignity of the House were introduced and permitted, it would ultimately tend to annihilate them. The consequences were of a most serious nature to a deliberate assembly, and went to destroy the very essence of it. He should not, for his part, give a vote on blind, but on general and well-founded confidence. He thought it necessary to advert to another topic, in which he felt himself peculiarly interested. The name of Earl Fitzwilliam had been mentioned by an honourable gentleman. It was a noble and venerable name, and he agreed in the fullest

manner to the eulogium which had been passed on it. But why introduce that name, because it had not been signed to the Order of Council? The alarm was, in his opinion, justly felt. It was an alarm that looked with a steady eye and laudable perseverance to prevention, and to councils of vigour. He should therefore wish to know from what part of that Nobleman's conduct it could be inferred, that he would not have put his name to the Order? Doctor Lawrence concluded by declaring, that he should vote against the motion.

Mr. COURTENAY lamented the acuteness of his learned friend's feelings, as he had imagined that he was not of quite so nervous a frame. The delicacy of his feelings, however, had been disturbed by every thing which had occurred on that side of the House. The state of the country had agitated his feelings, the pleasantry of his honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan), by forcing him to laugh, had thrown him into so violent a tremour, that he had almost lost the power of speech. The learned Doctor's feelings seemed to be of the texture of Tilburina, in the Critic, who was in continual alarm lest her feelings should be disturbed. He could not conceive how this uncommon delicacy had been produced, till he began to reflect that the innate modesty of the Doctor must have been greatly strengthened and improved in Doctors' Commons. Questions of great delicacy were every day brought forward in that Court, which, he should suppose, must be as liable to disturb the learned gentleman's feelings as any of those which he had had the misfortune to be agitated by that night. So many matrimonial complaints and differences, so many suits for alimony, so many divorces, *crim. con.* applications *e mensa et thoro*, and such like, that it was matter of surprize to him, that at the present moment he should find his feelings in such a state of irritation as to be hardly master of them, though he confessed that he had "chastised, disciplined, and reduced them" as much as he possibly could. Mr. Courtenay was interrupted as he was going on, by expressions of eagerness for the question; upon which he observed, that Pliny, in his natural history, mentions a species of men who have heads like dogs, and who bark instead of speaking. From the noise he had heard, he imagined that, at the last general election, some of this species had found their way into the House through the lists for some Treasury boroughs. The learned gentleman had passed a very handsome eulogium on the character of a Nobleman, whom he believed it was not unfair to name (Lord Fitzwilliam). He had passed this eulogium with an avowal that he believed Lord Fitzwilliam had set his name to the Order of Council, had he been

present. If this was so, it appeared somewhat strange, after the character he had given of the Chancellor of the Exchequer : “ A man whom nobody ought to trust—who had betrayed all those who had placed the smallest confidence in him.” Yet the learned gentleman was certain, that on the advice of this man the noble Lord, whom he styles his friend, would, with a manly spirit, set down his name to an illegal Order of Council, whereby the Bank of England is required to commit an act of bankruptcy, and to defraud all the public creditors who had placed their confidence in its honesty and punctuality. He thought the noble Lord could not be much obliged to the learned gentleman for the opinion which he had delivered respecting him.

Doctor LAWRENCE observed, that his feelings arose from the considerations of the present situation of the country ; and he had reason to believe that they were of a different nature from those which the honourable gentleman possessed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL pressed the necessity of an immediate decision by the Committee. He had no occasion for entertaining any alarm respecting the stability of the Bank ; but no instructions, he thought, should be given to the Committee which might tend to delay their report. After that report had been presented, it would then be time to determine whether the Committee should institute an inquiry into the circumstances that had occasioned the Order of Council. With respect to the appointment of a Committee by a ballot, it had been the uniform practice of our ancestors ; and the present was not the moment to treat such with disrespect. If his name should be found on the Secret Committee, he would do what he thought his duty should direct him to—at the same time he would declare that he would rather not be thought a member of it. He adverted to the speech of Mr. Grey, and said, that the principles upon which that honourable gentleman had declared he would support Mr. Fox, nearly went the length of a Revolution.

Mr. BANKS said, that in the present crisis of our country it was very indifferent to him what Committee was appointed to examine the matter that was before the House, so that the question could be properly and truly examined, because he trusted that a Committee of that House, whether in the House, or chosen by ballot, would do their duty : and as to the Committee being, a majority of them at least, favourable in politics to the Minister, that appeared to him to be an objection of but little weight ; for let the Committee be chosen whatever way it might, it was natural that, as a part, it must have the general complexion of the whole. He made

use of the list that was given to him before the ballot into the Committee, but he made use of his discretion also upon that list. He saw no impropriety in that list being given to him ; for there might be many Members whom he should have wished to have chosen, but who might not readily occur to him. The only doubt he had on the motion now before the House resolved itself into a question of time. If he was sure that the matter to be investigated by such a Committee as was now asked for, would not branch out into a length that would defeat the object that was now in view, and in which dispatch was so essential, he should be ready to agree to the appointment of a distinct Committee. But he feared the length of time which the investigation would require, would be injurious, perhaps fatal to the object which he, and he believed almost the whole House, had in view. The question of the solidity of the Bank would lie in a very narrow compass ; and it could not be supposed that much time would be required to make a Report ; and he believed the House would agree with him, there was great urgency upon that subject. But regard to the other question, namely, the causes of the present pressure, the matter was very different ; the investigation must necessarily be of an intricate nature, and must take up much time as well as labour. He owned that it was a desirable thing to restore confidence to the people in our public affairs ; and he was ready to confess, that, in order to do so, it would be necessary to go into the whole system of our finance. In the management and distribution of that finance, there had been great expenditure, much of it, he believed, was unavoidable ; but he should like to see tried, what savings could be made in our expenditure ; great savings, he hoped, could and should be made. But, in considering the conduct of Administration in that particular, some allowance ought to be made. They did not at first expect the war to have gone to the length it had, and therefore he did not blame them for not having managed the affairs of our finance so well as if they had at first been aware that the war would have so long continued. As the war had gone on to such a length, no person could be surprized at the immense extent of expenditure with which the contest had been accompanied. Had they really foreseen the length to which the war had been carried, he thought they could not have been screened from severe censure for what had happened ; but it was impossible for them to exercise that foresight. He was ready to confess, that, desirable as the confidence of the public was, he did not think it could ever be restored while the war continued. But although the sums which had been expended upon the war were lavish, yet it was not wonderful the case had been so ; for when we had a favourite object

in view, we are too apt to neglect the expence of the means by which that object is to be attained. It was the nature of man to set too high a value upon the object of his heart, and too little on the price he pays for obtaining it. Besides, the sums, though very large, that were expended upon this object of Ministers, were so often issued, and so rapidly upon each other, that in time their magnitude made less impression as the object was repeatedly exhibited. For these reasons, although they lamented the effect, they ought not to judge too harshly of His Majesty's Ministers. He looked forward to a complete investigation of all the causes which have brought on the present crisis. He looked forward also with an anxious hope, to very material and beneficial retrenchments of expence, but he did not think the present was the moment to enter on the investigation of either.

Mr. FOX then rose, and replied to the following effect—At this late hour of the night I feel myself bound to apply to the House for that indulgence which has been so often generously given to me, while I endeavour to answer what has been urged by way of objection to the motion which is now before you. I feel myself called upon at this late hour of the night to make this application, because the turn which the debate has taken has been in many respects extraordinary, and because the manner of treating the question does appear to me to be disingenuous to the last degree. Indeed, the management and dexterity, if management and dexterity it can be called, of this debate, has been of the most extraordinary kind. What was the management of the debate of last night? I proposed that we should inquire into the Order of Council. The answer was, that such a question should not be referred to the Committee then to be appointed: for to it was to be referred another separate and distinct object. It was stated by us that it might make a part of it, and that the same Committee might investigate both. We were told again in answer, “You cannot report upon both within a certain period, when it is to effect the first point should be settled.” That objection was removed by my suggestion that the Committee might report first upon the point which was the most pressing, and then proceed to the other. The House was of opinion, that a Committee of inquiry into the first object should be appointed; but that if the second object was entered into, that should be submitted to a separate Committee. What then happened? There was some difference of opinion respecting the mode of appointing the Committee. A gentleman proposed the Committee should be appointed by ballot, but from the lateness of the hour, and the

I had that another Committee should be chosen for the object I had in view, I did not press the House to come to a division. What then happens? The Minister, and those who are connected with him, prevail in obtaining all that is necessary to their views. He carries his point; he has obtained the Committee in the mode he wishes. I then move for the Committee, which I think necessary. I am now told that there shall not be a separate inquiry before another Committee. The Minister said, "that if we ballot for a Committee, we should know the purposes for which that Committee is formed, but that we should not refer to that Committee the subsequent extensive inquiry." But when that very Committee is elected by ballot; when he has got the very election he wanted, and is sure that a large majority of the Members are his friends and intimate political connections, he changes his tone; the doubts, as to the event to him, are then dispelled, and he says to himself, "I see my judges; the danger is over; I will therefore refer the whole case to these judges. Now that I see and know my judges, let me put the whole of my case before them; they are competent to do justice to the whole case, and therefore there is no necessity of appointing any other judges." Why, Sir, the Minister likes the majority of this balloted Committee so well, that I should not be surprised if, on Friday, he should propose that the subject matter of the motion of my honourable friend (Mr. Whitbread), upon the conduct of the Admiralty, should be referred to this Committee. It is indeed, a Committee to which he would be glad to refer any thing in which his character is interested. But it seems it is indecent to question the integrity of any Committee, whether chosen by ballot or not. If it be indecent, and made a charge against me, it is a charge which the practice of the right honourable gentleman has given birth to. Corruption to a certain extent is now openly avowed. I think I heard something to that effect in the course of the debate on this subject. I appeal to the oldest Member of this House, whether, until this day, he ever knew, in the practice of this House, of lists of the names of Members, friends of the Minister, to be chosen by ballot, ever being distributed with such care, assiduity, and diligence; and where a Member to whom such a list was given, avowed it to a certain extent, and publicly acted in conformity? There have been times, Sir, when a predecessor of yours, sitting in that chair, would not have heard that speech without instantly resenting it as insult to the dignity of this House. But these were times when the cant of opposition was prevalent I suppose. Be it so. It is not now the cant of a right honourable gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Windham, we presume.) It is true, he canted

as much as any of us on this side of the House against the influence of Ministers, against the increase of the power of the Crown, against corruption ; but what he has ever canted, he has so effectually recanted, that he is now as free from that old-fashioned vice as any man that ever sat upon the Treasury Bench. Is this a time to adhere to the old ground of suspicion against the corruption of the Minister in this House? I say it is. Is this a case in which we should do so? I say it is—I see the right honourable gentleman to whom I have just alluded smile, as if he thought I should use the same influence as the present Minister does if I were in the same situation. Will he upon his honour declare he thinks so? Did he think so when I had the pleasure to call him my friend? Does he really in his heart conceive that if at any time I was accused in a point touching my honour, as the present Minister now is, that I should attempt to tamper with my judges as he has done this very day? Sir, I am entitled to have these questions answered by that right honourable gentleman to my satisfaction. But to return to the question immediately before us. If the Directors of the Bank were to send in lists to the Members of this House, together with their opinion upon the Members who ought to be chosen upon the ballot for the Committee that has been chosen to-day, would not every body immediately declare they had given evidence of their own guilt? Does the Minister stand before you in a condition less culpable than the Bank Directors would be if they had interfered in the manner I have described? How comes this influence into this House, and how is it supported? We all know too well to be informed upon that subject; and when the particulars of the history of this transaction come to be properly and publicly known, it will be manifest to all the world, that by the manner in which he has conducted this ballot he has proved that he felt that he could not, dared not, meet the inquiry which I propose by the motion now before the House, and that conscious of his guilt he has shrunk from it. He has skulked from an inquiry which he cannot face. The state of this question now is, whether the inquiry shall go to the Committee which is already balloted, or to a separate Committee; and is curious enough, although not wonderful, that those who were at night for separate Committees upon this subject are now for a joint Committee. They last night did not wish for a joint Committee, because, however sanguine their hopes might be, it was yet certain what the complexion would be of that Committee, and therefore they did not like to run the hazard, however small, which, as I know, under all the circumstances, was small indeed; they did not chuse, however, to run that hazard, and therefore they

called for a separate Committee to determine their own object first, in which the House agreed with them, I think unfortunately; they have, however, now found out the completion of that Committee, and they are so well pleased with it that they are willing to refer every thing to that Committee. Why? Because the hazard is all over. It may be asked why we, who were last night for a joint are now for a separate Committee? The reason is a very plain one; we know that whatever the case may be, the Minister will at all events be screened by this Committee, as every thing must be governed by the majority of that Committee, and therefore we say give us the chance of another Committee; and I think it would have been but fair to have given us notice last night of the purpose for which they knew this Committee was to be balloted; instead of which, by a mere trick, they have conducted the whole proceeding as they thought fit.

With respect to the question of time, on which a learned gentleman (the Attorney General) has said a good deal, differing a little from the Minister, but which will, I dare say, be easily reconciled; he says, it is first necessary to satisfy the minds of the public upon this important business. I agree with him upon that point; but I differ from him upon another. He thinks the public are agitated on the question of the solidity of the Bank. Does that appear anywhere but in the speeches of the Minister's friends in this House? Have the Directors of the Bank said so at any time? Did they apply to the Minister for his friendly aid? No; this mischievous union between Government and the Bank was by the compulsion of the Minister; it was from force exerted by him that they have formed a junction. The Minister had seized the cash of the Bank, and therefore it is that the public mind is agitated, and, upon that view of the subject, justly agitated. But does that make an inquiry into the affairs of the Bank necessary? No; the inquiry ought to be into the conduct of the Minister. Do I distrust my banker?—No; he is a solvent man, of good faith, punctuality, and honour and all the world acknowledge him to be so. Do I want security from him?—No; but I want to be secured against robbers who have entered his house, laid hold of all his cash, and then declare themselves his partners! I wish to know whether any man breathing had a doubt of the solidity of the Bank before the Minister laid his rapacious hands upon the cash there? Why, then, I ask, the public mind be now agitated, who has caused this mischief? may be said, that there has been a great run upon the Bank for cash and particularly for the last week; I am ready to admit it. But then I say, that the conduct of the Minister was the cause of the

he it was, together with his associates, who struck terror in the public mind by the rumours of invasion. This is partly the cause of that run; but the Order in Council on Sunday, and the Proclamation on Monday last, finished what had been begun upon that matter. All this is the natural effect of the system which the Minister has pursued in the course of the present war. Men will naturally be terrified when these artifices are employed to work upon their imaginations. They have been terrified, and we see the effect of that terror. It has been that of giving up to the management of the Minister all the interest of the stock of the public creditor. This is the effect of the Minister's system, perhaps the effect he intended to produce, for he must be a fool to expect any other effect from such a cause. I say, his conduct has struck more terror in the public mind than any misfortunes that have happened to us could have done. And now that the subject of invasion is thus presented to my mind, I shall deliver an opinion shortly upon it. No man in this country, I believe, feels less apprehension upon the subject of the invasion of Great Britain than I do. I am sanguine as to the favourable result, should so desperate a measure be attempted. An invasion would certainly be a great evil to us; but I do maintain, that if the French should land in this island as great a force as is practicable for them to land, I should think the mischief they could do to the permanent interests of this country comparatively small, when put into the scale opposite to the mischief which the proceedings of the last two or three days will occasion. This is my sincere opinion.

The honourable gentleman who opposed my motion, first went into the consideration of a subject of which I ought to take some notice. He asked why more credit should be given to the accuser than the accused? One man asserts a thing roundly, and another denies it in the same manner; why, without proof, should those who hear both, presume the one to be honourable and the other dishonourable? All these are in their nature, I admit it, unanswerable, because there is no reason for supposing, without evidence, that one side is more honourable than another. But surely I may say that interest attaches more powerfully on one side of this House than it does upon another. I do not say that there are not men of as great talents and abilities on the Ministerial side of the House as there are on this. I do not say that many on the other side are not actuated by honourable motives; but when we find men confide in a Minister year after year, long after they have been told the effect which that confidence will produce; and when year after year these effects have as constantly appeared as they have been

foretold, surely it is not very uncharitable to suppose that there is at least an unfortunate obstinacy in the continuance of such a confidence. An honourable gentleman has said to-night "that the Minister did not suppose, at the commencement, that this war would have been of so long duration; the Minister mistook the matter, therefore we should not judge of him too harshly." Is mistake a ground for confidence? "He has expended much more money than could have been wished." Is that a ground for confidence? That right honourable gentleman had frequently opportunities of knowing all these things, for he was told of them from time to time, and yet he who is convinced that many things have been done which were improper, so much that he thinks they must never happen again, and that the confidence of the public can never be restored without a minute inquiry and great retrenchment, has uniformly neglected to set on foot such inquiry, or call for these retrenchments, for upon every question of that nature he has, without one exception, voted for the Minister; and now that his confidence is gone, he continues his support to the Minister!—"Misfortune is no proof of guilt." Certainly not. "We cannot prove the guilt of the Minister." How could we prove it without inquiry? Have we not repeatedly asked for it, and has it not been as repeatedly refused? In all these things that right honourable gentleman, who is thus convinced that nothing can save the nation but inquiry, refuses inquiry. It is only when the nation has become bankrupt that he assents to inquiry, and even then he says it should be put off to a distant day. When I see this sort of conduct on the part of those who support the Minister, must I be that man of modern candour, after all, to say there is no corrupt influence that keeps them together? And shall I be told I am using harsh language when I say they are actuated by corrupt motives? Do I impute corruption to all the supporters of the present Minister? I certainly do no such thing; but to many of them I do. Here I am reminded of a sentiment which was uttered by the late Lord Chatham: he said "that he had known men of great ambition for power and dominion, many whose characters were tarnished by glaring defects, some with many vices, who, nevertheless, could be prevailed upon to join in the best public measures; but that the moment he found any man who had set himself down as a candidate for a Peerage, he despaired of his being ever a friend to his country." Look at the history of the present Minister and of the Peerages he has given away, and then ask yourselves whether he has not gained an enormous influence in that way? Examine whether he has not disposed of more Peerages than any other Minister ever did in Eng-

land in the same length of time, in any part of our history? I have heard of negative successes in this war. I do not wish to be an egotist, but I think I may say, without vanity, that I have some negative merit. I have not had the misfortune to counsel this odious, this ruinous war! I have not had the misfortune to lend assistance to the destruction of hundreds of thousands of my fellow beings! I have not had the misfortune to load my country with hundreds of millions of debt! I have not had the misfortune to set my name to a proclamation, manifesting to the world the bankruptcy of my country! These are my negative merits, and I claim them as my due; and the Minister is welcome to despise, while I enjoy, the comfortable reflections that arise out of them. It has been insinuated in the course of this debate, that whatever may be the present situation of this country, it would have been much worse if my honourable friend (Mr. Grey) had been one of its Ministers. I do not wish to say all I think of my honourable friend. I leave it to others to form their opinion of his talents and his virtue, highly as I esteem them; my testimony is not valuable to him; it would, if I gave it, be subject to disadvantage; for as it proceeds from friendship, it would be subject to the charge of being partial; for we all know that is a defect inseparable from friendship.

But I call on the honourable gentleman who said this country would be in a worse condition now than it is, if my honourable friend had been Minister during this war, to assign a reason for thinking so—thinking so! he cannot think it; but for saying so. Could any ambition, any folly, or any rashness of my honourable friend, supposing him to be guilty of any, have placed this country in a worse condition than it is at this instant? Let him point out the men—that is not so material—let him point out the means by which this country could have been brought to a worse condition than it is in at this very moment—perhaps he will say we should have made a disgraceful peace with France—perhaps, indeed, we should have made peace; but does he mean to say that we might not have made peace some time ago, and have made it upon terms that would have been better by sixty or an hundred millions than any man in this country can at this moment even hope to obtain? and we should have avoided also the act of bankruptcy which we are now discussing, and which I say is the most calamitous event that ever took place in this country since the Revolution. But I do not wonder at this species of attack being made upon us who oppose the Minister. It is perfectly consonant to the character of many of those who have so long confided in the Minister, and who are now undeceived, and have dismissed their credulity, although they con-

tinue their support ; we have contributed to undeceive them, and they cannot forgive us for it. This reminds me of a scene that was written by a close observer of human nature, and who knew how to paint it—I mean Ben Jonson. It is to be found in the *Alchymist*, wherein it appears, “ that the impostor had played his “ tricks very successfully for a long time upon his dupes ; and when “ he was detected, the dupes became very angry, not at the impostor, but at those who had detected him.” Such is the case before us ; the dupes of the Minister do not direct their anger against the impostor, but against those who have detected him, and therefore I do not wonder at their abusing us. I have long thought that the Minister was driving this country rapidly to ruin, but I never thought I should have seen it realised as it has been this day ; and this, too, but a few weeks after he had boasted of the wealth, the commerce, the resources of this country being, as it were, untouched ; the end of all which pompous declaration is a public undisguised bankruptcy. [Here the Minister shewing some marks of disapprobation], Mr. Fox said, what ! does the Minister deny it ? The fact is certainly recorded. But I should not wonder if the public odium should fall less upon the Minister than upon many persons who sit around him, for they were rather more to blame for listening to, than he for amusing them with absurd tales. And here again I must be excused for adverting to what has been said upon the conduct of the Minister, “ that he did not think the war would continue so long.” Was he not told of it ? Was not this House warned of it ? Have we not mentioned it from day to day as the probability of the case ? But he is wiser than us, and therefore his opinion is of more weight than ours. Be it so. But if, by a series of events you find that, with all his wisdom, he has brought you to a public bankruptcy, surely there can be nothing unreasonable in asking you to examine a little before you give him any farther confidence. But it seems, after all, “ that our affairs are not “ in a state of bankruptcy. There has been no act of bankruptcy “ committed.” If the Minister means to say, that there is no law in England by which you can strike a docket against the Government, I shall agree with him. There certainly is no such statute, nor any legal authority for declaring it so. But in the common acceptance of the phrase “ a bankruptcy,” I understand that state, or any body of men, to be bankrupt who cannot pay their creditors what is due, and acknowledged to be due to them. You owe your creditors large, very large sums, which you refuse to pay. “ No ; we do not refuse to pay. We only say we will not pay in money, but we will pay in paper.” “ Well,” say the creditors,

“ we will not take your paper.” “ Not take our paper ! why you always used to take it.” The practice, to be sure, is a little different between taking paper by choice, and taking it by force ; at least I think so. The Minister and his friends are welcome to be of another opinion. I make some difference between the paper for which I can have money, and that for which I cannot have money when I want money. You formerly gave your creditors paper, for which they could have money ; now you give them paper, for which they cannot have money ; that is the difference : whether that be a bankruptcy or not, let the present holders of your paper determine : but all these distinctions are frivolous and idle. Bankrupts you are in the common sense of mankind ; and I say that calamity was brought on by the misconduct of the Minister ; and if it be your object to retrieve yourselves from your misfortunes, you cannot do better than adopt this motion for inquiry into the conduct which has brought you into your present condition. If you neglect that, you will proceed from bad to worse, and your total and irretrievable ruin will overtake you soon. The progress you have made upon your road to destruction has been but slow ; but believe me, you have not long to travel, if you do not take another course. I am blamed for calling a Minister a criminal ; I wish he did not deserve it : but I am bound to say, that, upon the face of things, he appears to be a very great criminal ; he seems to me to have nothing to plead in his own excuse ; he enjoys the approbation of his Sovereign, has possessed for years the unlimited confidence of this House, pretends to be a man of talents equal to the task of managing your affairs ; he has never been refused any supply, however enormous, that he has asked, and yet he has, with all these advantages, brought you into a state of bankruptcy. The question is, Will you, or will you not, institute an inquiry into his conduct ? Different times have their customs, and I will for a moment revert to what was the feeling of this House, and of the people of this country, a quarter of a century ago. Let us suppose twenty years ago, or to come a little nearer, ten years ago—but we must not come too near—what, I say, would have been the feelings of this House, if, ten years ago, any man had said, you think your finances very prosperous ? yet, in the beginning of the year 1797, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will issue a proclamation to prohibit the Bank of England paying any one man in money for a bank note ! Would you not have thought such a man a lunatic ? Or if you thought he was not so, and he had been a Member of this House, would you not have impeached him as an enemy to the State, and loudly called for punishment upon him ? and yet you see such is

your case at this very hour. "But circumstances have altered since that time." Indeed they have; but what are these circumstances? Have not all the acts of the Minister been gradually leading to this very point? Can you not trace them? And when I am told that I should have acted as he has done were I in the same situation, I beg leave to deny it; and I call on every man who knows the whole of my political life, to state an instance of a pledge I have given for the public service, which in any situation I have not endeavoured to fulfil. I know this part of this discussion is unimportant, but that is not my fault. I was called upon to enter into it by the attack which has been made upon me. I say again, that every thing you have heard calls upon you, in the discharge of the duty you owe to the people of this country, to enter into an inquiry into the causes which have brought you into this degraded condition. If it should appear, as I hope and believe it will, that this condition was brought upon you by the misconduct of the Minister, then you have the consolation to reflect that your affairs may yet be, in some degree, retrieved; but if it shall turn out, as I trust in God it will not, that your affairs have been as well conducted as human prudence could conduct them, you can look for nothing but inevitable ruin. The only means to ascertain this is, that of your relinquishing your confidence in the Minister, and entering into a full inquiry into his conduct, which, I say, has brought you into this situation. If you do not, it will be matter of indifference to me how you ballot for any Committee in future upon this business. I have seen, by the management of these two debates, that the Minister's object has been to put off the inquiry into his conduct as long as he can, and also to secure to himself a Committee of his own friends by whom he is to be tried.

The House then divided:

For the motion, 67; Against it, 141.

Mr. SHERIDAN then moved, "That Mr. Fox be added to the Committee on the affairs of the Bank, &c." on which the House divided:

For the motion, 53; Against it, 144.

Mr. HOBART reported from the Committee, who were appointed to examine the lists of fifteen person's names to the Committee of Secrecy, ordered yesterday by the House to be appointed, and to report to the House upon which fifteen persons the majority fell; that the Committee had examined the lists accordingly, and found that the majority had fallen upon the following persons, viz. William Hussey, Esquire; Charles Grey, Esquire; William Plumer, Esquire; Thomas Powys, Esquire; Thomas Grenville,

Esquire ; William Wilberforce, Esquire ; John Blackburne, Esquire ; Thomas Berney Bramston, Esquire ; Charles Bragge, Esquire ; Sir John Mitford ; William Wilberforce Bird, Esquire ; John Fane, Esquire ; Isaac Hawkins Browne, Esquire ; Sir John Scott ; and John-William Anderson, Esquire : and he read the Report in his place, and afterwards delivered it in at the table, where the same was read.

*List of the Minority, on Mr. Fox's motion, "To appoint a Committee
"to inquire into the causes which produced the Order of Council the
"26th of February."*

Aubry, Sir J.
Baker, W.
Baker, J.
Barclay, G.
Beaucklerk, C.
Biddulph, R.
Bird, W. W.
Bouverie, Hon. E.
Brogden, J.
Bullock, J.
Burdett, Sir F.
Byng, G.
Coke, T.
Combe, H. C.
Copley, Sir L.
Courtenay, J.
Crewe, J.
Curwen, J. C.
Denison, W. J.
Fitzpatrick, General
Fletcher, Sir H.
Fox, Right Hon. C. J.
Galway, Viscount
Geary, Sir W.
Greene, J.
Grey, Charles
Hare, J.
Harrison, J.
Jefferys, N.
Jervoise, C. J.
Jolliffe, W.
Langston, J.
Lemon, Sir W.

Lloyd, J. M.
Milner, Sir W.
Martin, J.
Nicholls, J.
North, D.
Northey, W.
Pierse, H.
Phillips, J. G.
Plumer, W.
Porter, G.
Rawdon, Hon. J.
Rawdon, Hon. G.
Richardson, J.
Robson, R. B.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, Lord W.
St. John St. A.
Scudamore, J.
Shum, G. C.
Shuckburg, Sir G.
Smith, W.
Spencer, Lord R.
Stanley, Lord
Sturt, C.
Tarleton, General
Tierney, G.
Townshend, Lord J.
Tufton, Hon. H.
Walwyn, J.
Walpole, Colonel
Western, C. C.
Winnington, Sir F.
Wycombe, Earl of

TELLERS — R. B. Sheridan, and Samuel Whitbread.

Thursday, 2d March.

The Canterbury election was reported a void election ; and new writs were ordered for the election of two new Members.

Mr. MAINWARING, Chairman of the Committee appointed to try the merits of the Carlisle election, reported that the sitting Members were duly elected, that the petition against the return was not frivolous or vexatious, and that the opposition to the petition was not frivolous or vexatious.

Mr. WILBERFORCE BIRD moved the second reading of the bill for suspending the acts relative to the issue of small notes.

The bill being read a second time, and the question for the commitment being put,

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that the general power of issuing notes, which would be given by this bill, would be attended with bad effects. If the poor industrious labourer could not procure the full value for the note, it might give rise to great discontents. In order to prevent any disturbances which this probable evil might occasion, he thought that, at any price, (or what was to be put in competition with the public tranquillity,) at any expence, something ought be done to obviate any consequence of this kind! He then suggested that some instantaneous issue of silver coin should be made, that copper pieces of 2d. or 3d. value should likewise be made, to afford some supply for the demand which must be occasioned from the issue of paper.

Mr. BIRD said, that there were means provided in the bill to enforce, in a summary manner, payment of the notes to be issued three days after demand.

Mr. SHERIDAN was afraid that such a provision would be attended with little advantage, as it would be attended with expence to enforce the execution.

Mr. Alderman LUSHINGTON thought that the issue of notes ought to be confined to country bankers, for the indiscriminate issue would bring forward too much of this paper.

The SPEAKER reminded the House, that these considerations would come with more regularity before the House in the Committee. The present question for the decision of the House was, whether the bill should be committed?

Mr. W. BIRD wished to have the bill committed immediately, if there was no objection.

Mr. WHITBREAD desired the House to be cautious against opening the door to the general issue of this sort of paper. He thought it ought to be restricted to bankers.

Mr. Chancellor PITT wanted to have the bill passed as speedily as possible. If there were any difficult objections in the Committee, the farther consideration might then be deferred till to-morrow. In the mean time, he had to inform the House, that he

had some observations to offer, which he would withhold till the bill came to be committed.

Mr. WHITBREAD said, he did not wish to throw any obstacle in the way of the bill.

The SPEAKER suggested the propriety of deferring the commitment of the bill till the Report of the Committee appointed to try the merits of the Colchester contested election were received, which was agreed to.

Mr. WHITE then made the report of the persons nominated for the Committee to try the Colchester election, which were as follow :

Sir John Frederic, Bart. Chairman,

J. Whitmore, Esq.

John Pitt, Esq.

J. H. Addington, Esq.

C. W. Taylor, Esq.

J. Martin, Esq.

T. Estcourt, Esq.

Hon. J. Bruce

Hon. P. C. Windham,

G. H. Harcourt, Esq.

G. Clarke, Esq.

J. Euston Gower, Esq.

Viscount Galway,

J. Nicholls, Esq.

W. Lushington, Esq.

The House then resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House on the bill for suspending the operation of certain acts prohibiting the issue of small notes.

Mr. Chancellor PITT supported the bill as a temporary measure in the fullest extent, and intimated that it was in contemplation to issue coin, both of silver and copper.

A conversation ensued upon a suggestion of Mr. Sheridan, that the issue of notes should be limited to bankers, because this would prevent too great an issue, and guard better against forgery, and support the credit of the notes. This was supported by Mr. Fox, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Crewe, Mr. Wigley, Mr. Western, &c.

Mr. Chancellor PITT and the SOLICITOR GENERAL contended, that it was better to allow manufacturers themselves to issue notes, who would not issue more than were necessary, as payment might be enforced in a summary manner after three days demand.

The bill then went through the Committee, the Report was read and agreed to, and the bill ordered to be read a third time to-morrow. — Adjourned.

Friday, 3d March.

A message was received from the Lords, informing the House, that their Lordships had passed the bill for removing doubts with

respect to the Bank issuing bank bills, under the sum of 5l. without any amendment.

The Speaker, with the Members, were then summoned to the Upper House, to attend a Royal Commission. On his return, he informed the House, that the Royal assent had been given by commission to the Bank-note bill, and to other public and private bills.

Mr. WILBERFORCE BIRD moved the order of the day, for suspending the acts of the 15th and 17th of his present Majesty, suspending the issue of small notes.

Mr. HAWKINS BROWNE said, that he would oppose the passing of the bill, unless a clause was inserted in it to repeal it during the present session. The more a person was embarrassed in his circumstances, the more apt he would be to resort to the expedient of issuing quantities of these small notes. He wished, therefore, in order to prevent the abuse of the bill, some severer punishment should be enacted than the mere penalty of distress. It would be impossible to correct the fraudulent issue of those bills without rendering the persons, who should fail in their payment, liable to be imprisoned and sent to the house of correction; except these severe restraints were adopted, every individual would be enabled to set up a mint in his own house, and increase the artificial wealth of the country to the destruction of real credit. He concluded with moving, "That instead of three months, the operation of the bill should be confined to one month."

Mr. W. BIRD begged leave to bring up a clause, which he was desirous should be inserted in the bill, namely: "That if any person should fail in the payment of a note three days after it became due, that it should be lawful for the Justices to summon him before them, to award costs to the plaintiff with the payment of the amount of the note, and to levy distress upon the effects of the person so failing in his engagement."

Mr. SHERIDAN stated this was as important a subject as could possibly engage the attention of the House in the present unfortunate situation of the country. One unfortunate consequence would follow from the issue of those bills, that if any should not be paid, a general distrust would take place with respect to their validity, and the whole would undergo a most alarming depreciation. At the same time it would be a most unfortunate thing to hold out to all the manufacturers in the kingdom, a menace of being imprisoned or sent to the house of correction, if not from any fraudulent purpose, but from the failure of remittances, or the pressure of the times, they should be unable to make good their engagement. If

the bill was accompanied with such a menace, instead of having the effect to afford a temporary relief to their credit, it would tempt them rather to incur the evils of immediate bankruptcy, than run the risk of being subjected to a punishment so painful and degrading. At the same time, if these bills were to rest merely on nominal credit, they would not answer the purpose to afford relief to the laborious poor. If presented to the baker and butcher, they would not be accepted by them to to their full amount, and this circumstance must also tend to create a general depreciation. He should therefore propose, in order to remedy this evil, that the persons issuing those notes, as a security for their payment, should previously deposit property adequate to the amount of the notes issued, and that no individuals should be allowed to issue those notes, whose substance did not allow them to make this deposit. This precaution, he remarked, would remove every chance for fraud or depreciation, which must otherwise inevitably take place in the circulation of this paper. If manufacturers were in such a situation as to justify them in issuing those notes, they must either be on such a footing of credit with their banker, or in possession of good bills, which would enable them to produce security to the amount of the notes issued. He illustrated his proposition by referring to the instance of lottery tickets. The dealers in those tickets were allowed to divide them in small shares for the accommodation of their customers, after having deposited the original tickets as a security. He then gave notice of his intention to move that evening for an immediate supply of copper coinage in pennies and two-pennies, for the relief of the laborious poor. He should not move for any fresh coinage of half-pence, as, if these were of the proper standard, they must tend to cut out all those which were now in circulation, an evil which might be of greater magnitude than the relief it was intended to afford. He could not confide for a moment in the diligence of Ministers; else when they foresaw, as they must necessarily have done, the approach of this great public calamity, they would have taken measures to have had by this time waggon loads of this useful coin coming up from Bolton's Manufactory at Birmingham.

The MASTER OF THE ROLLS agreed with Mr. Sheridan, that it would be desirable to provide a fund to answer the notes before they were issued; but he also thought that some penalty should be annexed to the non-payment of them, and that in a summary way, otherwise the poor man, who was not able to go to law with the rich man, might not be able to get his money. He wished to

hold out a terror to prevent a man from issuing notes, unless he had effects to answer them.

The SPEAKER observed, that, as the clause contained a pecuniary penalty, it could not be inserted into the bill, unless it went through a Committee of the whole House; and the place to argue on the insufficiency of the penalty, would be in that Committee; and the House having accordingly resolved itself into a Committee on the bill,

Mr. Chancellor PITT then spoke against the penal part of the clause: he thought it would be hard that, to personal misfortune, personal disgrace, and punishment, should be superadded. With respect to what had fallen from Mr. Sheridan about copper coin, he had no objection to the address which he meant to offer: and he thought it necessary then to inform the House that directions had been already given, and proper measures taken to promote that object.

Mr. SHERIDAN, Mr. WILBERFORCE, Mr. FOX, and Mr. BRYAN EDWARDS, spoke upon the clause. The latter expressed himself directly against the bill, because it went to multiply the quantity of paper in circulation; and thus increase the very evil which had caused the distress of the country. The clause then went through the Committee, in which the penalty that a Magistrate might inflict was limited to the sum of twenty shillings; and being reported, it was added to the bill by way of rider.

Mr. W. BIRD then desired, that the duration of the bill might be limited to one month instead of three, with a power to renew the act if necessary.

The SPEAKER observed, that in the interval between the expiration and the renewal of the bill, the Easter recess would occur, so that there might not be time to renew it.

Mr. BASTARD said, he could not sit in his place and hear holidays talked of at a time when the salvation of the country was at stake. A clause was then brought up to continue the bill in force till Monday the 1st of May; after which, the bill passed the House.

Mr. SHERIDAN then moved, "That an humble address be presented to His Majesty, that he will be graciously pleased to give directions that measures may be taken for procuring an immediate supply of such copper coinage as may be best adapted to the payment of the laborious poor in the present exigency." Ordered.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS. It was my intention this night to

have given notice of a motion for Monday, not then conceiving that the intelligence on which it is founded had been got abroad so generally among the public, as I since find it has done. Having, however, perceived that the intelligence is as extensively known as it is matter of the highest satisfaction and exultation, I cannot for one moment delay affording an opportunity to this House to express those sentiments of admiration and gratitude which every British bosom must feel on such an occasion. One reason why I was chiefly unwilling to bring forward a motion of thanks on this day was, that I was extremely desirous, that, previous to that step, the House and the public should be in possession of all the facts and documents relative to this illustrious transaction. I was anxious not to proceed to this pleasing task of my duty without being sanctioned by the authority of the gallant Admiral himself, who, in his official dispatches, has detailed all the circumstances relative to this glorious event, with a degree of perspicuity and clearness which reflect on him the highest honour, and which I only should injure by any statement or repetition of mine. Waving, however, any detail, and satisfied that the general knowledge of the event can only excite in this House the same rapturous sensations, which I understand have been already expressed by the public, in order to command the most cordial and heartfelt assent to the motion which I now mean to bring forward, it is only necessary for me to intimate that accounts have this day arrived in town that a British Admiral with fifteen sail of the line, fought, pursued, attacked, and conquered a fleet of the enemy, consisting of twenty-seven sail of the line, and, as trophies of this victory, the most signal and illustrious that ever was achieved in the annals of the British navy, has sent into port as prizes two ships of 112 guns each, and two others, one of 80 and one of 70 guns. Whether he has since reaped any more glorious trophies of his distinguished success, I am now not enabled to state to the House. But sure I am, that every British heart must be united to pay the gallant Admiral that tribute of gratitude and admiration due to his admirable conduct and his eminent services to the public. Penetrated with this feeling, and anxious no longer to repress the impatience which every Member must feel to join in this tribute, I shall conclude with now moving, “That the
“ thanks of this House to be given to Admiral Sir John Jervis,
“ Knight of the most Honourable Order of the Bath, for his able
“ and gallant conduct in the most brilliant and decisive victory
“ obtained over the Spanish fleet, on the 14th day of February last,
“ by the fleet under his command.”

Mr. FOX. In seconding this motion, I rise only to say a very

few words. By returning our thanks on this occasion, we cannot but feel with peculiar pride and satisfaction, that we express our gratitude and acknowledgements for the most brilliant and illustrious exploit ever performed in the annals of this country.

Mr. KEENE. I do not conceive that on this occasion a mere expression of our thanks is a sufficient testimony of our sense of the merit of the gallant Admiral. I think it our indispensable duty to follow it up with a resolution that may substantially mark the deep impression we feel of the distinguished service that has been rendered to the country, and which I am confident will meet the general wishes of the nation, and command the warmest tribute of public approbation. I shall therefore move, "That an humble
" address be presented to His Majesty, that His Majesty would be
" graciously pleased to confer some signal mark of his royal favour
" on Admiral Sir John Jervis, for his gallant and meritorious ex-
" ertions on the 14th of February, &c."

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS. I should be extremely sorry that any disagreement of opinion should arise on any motion suggested on this occasion. No man who knows my sentiments of the character and public services of the gallant Admiral, can possibly suspect that I should be in the smallest degree backward to bear the most decided testimony to his merits, or conceive any reward too great for his distinguished and successful exertions; but at the same time by expressing their thanks on this occasion, the House discharge that duty which belongs to them. It is surely not necessary for them to interfere with the reward which is so eminently due to this illustrious character, or to take out of the hands of His Majesty the task which peculiarly belongs to the royal office, and which must be so highly gratifying to the royal feelings. It cannot surely be suspected that in this instance, there will be any want either of inclination or promptitude on the part of the Executive Government, to do justice to the eminent services of the gallant Admiral, and to meet the wishes of a grateful people.

Mr. MARTIN. This naval victory affords me peculiar satisfaction, as it furnishes a decided proof, that if we confine our operations to sea affairs, we cannot fail of success, and shall at once consult the interests of humanity and the glory of the British empire.

Mr. KEENE. Notwithstanding what has been urged by the right honourable Secretary, I am still of opinion that it is incumbent upon this House to express some peculiar mark of their approbation for a service which is universally admitted to be the most meritorious and distinguished that has ever occurred in the annals of the

country. I am convinced that it is only by adopting the motion I have proposed that the House can render a just tribute to the merits of the gallant Admiral, or adequately meet the grateful sense of the nation at large. At all events I am desirous for the sake of this illustrious person that my motion may be recorded on the Journals of this House. Mr. Keene concluded with repeating the terms of the motion.

Sir CHARLES BUNBURY rose to second the motion. I am convinced, that if Parliament are desirous to evince on this occasion that they feel along with their constituents, they cannot discover too great promptitude in conferring on the gallant Admiral the most signal and unequivocal proof of their gratitude and admiration. This brave officer by his conduct has stamped a reputation which will be as lasting as the annals of British glory. The name of Jervis will ever be dear and illustrious to his country. One of the captured ships, which rank among the trophies of his victory, suggests a title appropriate to the character of the gallant Admiral. Allow me to greet him by the appellation of *Salvador del Mundo*.

Mr. Chancellor PITT. I could not possibly have conceived that, on this particular topic, any point could have occurred, which would in the smallest degree be distressing to my feelings. I do not, however, know, that any subject could possibly have been introduced so extremely distressing to my feelings as the present motion. It cannot surely be conceived that there can exist the smallest difference of sentiment with respect to the extent and value of the services of the gallant Admiral, or the feelings of gratitude and admiration which are due to his character. But even amidst those effusions of gratitude and admiration, which are peculiarly called forth by that brilliant and decisive exploit which engages our present attention, it is incumbent upon the House not to suffer themselves to be carried from the sense of propriety by the impulse of their feelings, or amidst the ardour of their acknowledgements to confound those distinct functions which belong to the different bodies of the Legislature. I again repeat that, with respect to the extent of the merit and the value of the services of the brave officer in question, there can be no difference of opinion, nor can any expression of approbation, and testimony of reward, be conceived too great for his admirable conduct, and distinguished services to the country. But I must suggest to the House, transcendant as is the brilliancy of the present transaction, whether the history of this country can be expected in the present moment, to produce any instance of gallantry and prowess of such extensive benefit, and unrivalled splendor, as cannot find some nearly similar example in its former annals.

There is, surely, no point of military glory, no proof of professional desert, on the part of British officers, which is new to the records of our national fame. But at no period, I believe, has it ever occurred, that on the first intimation of victory, such a motion should be brought forward in this House. Can it possibly be suspected, that on the part of the highest branch of the Legislature, there is such an extreme insensibility to the glory and interest of the country that there can exist the smallest disposition to overlook the merits, or pass by the claims of the most valuable servants of the public? I do not know that in any former instance of the most splendid achievements, any such proceeding as that which is now proposed was sanctioned by the House of Commons. I can confidently refer to what took place with respect to the gallant and beneficial services of Rodney, of Keppel, and of Howe—Officers, in whose case, the House will not surely be accused of having felt any coldness of approbation, or deficiency of gratitude. But what will, perhaps, be considered as a still more extraordinary instance in the history of the country, I am not aware that any such proceeding was even adopted with respect to the famous Duke of Marlborough, whose name makes so illustrious a figure in the annals of the country. Can it be supposed that the Crown can ever require to be prompted to pay the just tribute of approbation and honour to those who have eminently signalized themselves by their professional merits, and their public services? If the House feel peculiar sentiments of satisfaction and gratitude in contemplating the meritorious exploit of the gallant Admiral, it must be no small addition to their pleasure to find that the same sentiments are no less felt by that part of the Legislature to which we are all bound to look up with the highest respect, and to which it peculiarly belongs to distinguish by its favours those whom it honours with its approbation. On the part of His Majesty's Ministers, I can safely affirm, that before this last splendid instance of the good conduct and valour of the gallant Admiral, we have not been remiss in watching the uniform tenor of his professional career; we have witnessed in the whole of his proceedings, such instances of perseverance, of diligence, and of exertion in the public service, as though less brilliant and dazzling than this last exploit, are only less meritorious, as they are put in competition with the glory of a single day, which has produced such extensive, and incalculable benefits to the British empire. Feeling such to have been my high sense of the conduct of this brave officer, during the whole of his command, I am not afraid of incurring any imputation of a desire to subtract from his merits, or to withhold the honours to which he has so justly established his claim. I am only

desirous that the approbation of this House should be conveyed in a manner consistent with the practice of the country, and the course of the Constitution. I confess, that I should feel myself infinitely relieved by the consent of the honourable gentleman to withdraw his motion. If he should persist to press it on the House, undoubtedly, I shall not attempt to get rid of it by a direct negative—on such a day as this, that were impossible—but I shall meet it by moving the previous question.

Mr. SHERIDAN. It is impossible but that every man must feel the sentiment that every thing that can be done by this House ought to be done in the present instance to express our high sense of the distinguished merit and eminent services of the gallant Admiral. I differ, however, from the honourable mover of the resolution, who has stated, that for the sake of Sir John Jervis, he is, at all events, desirous that it should appear on the Journals of this House. If the motion be put and opposed, to insert it on the journals of this House, instead of adding to the well-earned reputation of that brave officer, would, I conceive, have a contrary effect. The journals of this House do not contain the records of that brave officer's glory. They would only bear testimony to the rejection of the motion. I cannot, however, submit to the doctrine that this House have no right to interfere to express their marked approbation of a distinguished character, or to apply to His Majesty to signalize the most eminent public services by a peculiar mark of his royal favour. If there was any chance that the present motion would be passed unanimously, it would experience my warmest approbation. I cannot allow the proud boast of the right honourable gentleman to pass unnoticed, that in no instance has there appeared on the part of the Executive Government any degree of insensibility to the worth of gallant officers, or any want of promptitude to reward the claims of public services. The very mention of the name of the honourable Admiral must forcibly recal the recollection of the former services, and the degree of attention which they experienced from the Executive Government. No mark of honour—no testimony of reward has hitherto followed from his gallant exertions, which Ministers feel themselves compelled to notice in terms of the highest panegyric. While they have withheld from him, and other illustrious characters, the just reward of their merit, on whom have they chosen to throw away their honours? On persons, who have no pretensions to professional desert, who can exhibit no claims of public service. The late instances of individuals, on whom, for no reason whatever that could justify any addition of dignity in the eyes of the nation, the distinction of the Peerage has been conferred,

undoubtedly tend to cheapen the honour, and to take away from it all idea of reward for public services. If any honour could be conferred on the gallant Admiral in a way so marked as to separate it from the mass of honours which have been lavished on others, it would undoubtedly only be a just tribute for his distinguished services. I conceive that I am fully borne out by facts, when I aver that honours have not lately been conferred in a manner agreeable to the public voice, or the public wishes. I need only allude to the instance of a noble Lord (Howe) who, by his gallant and able conduct, had formed the strongest claims upon the gratitude and justice of his country. A blue ribband was then vacant. It was pointed out for the noble Lord by public expectation and public rumour. The noble Lord could certainly feel no desire for such a distinction from any motive of personal vanity: but it was natural he should wish for the dignity of the service to which he belonged, that it should experience the most distinguished marks of the royal approbation. But instead of the blue ribband being given to the gallant and venerable Admiral, he was offered a paltry bauble, which he properly rejected, while this signal honour, which ought only to be accorded to the highest merit, was jerked on the shoulders of a person, for what claims of public service, I confess, I do not know, and I am disposed to think that the country must be equally at a loss to discover.

Mr. KEENE. I was certainly anxious to mark the conduct of the gallant Admiral by the most distinguished testimony of approbation which this House could confer; but in compliance with what I find to be the wish of a great majority in this House, I shall not persist to press any motion.

Mr. FOX. I certainly do not rise to object to withdrawing the motion, I rise only to enter my decided protest against the doctrine laid down by the right honourable gentleman, as if there was any thing contrary to the forms of this House, or the practice of the Constitution, in expressing our opinion in the most decided manner of services, eminent to a degree beyond any that ever called forward the honours of the Crown, or the rewards of the House. If this question had come to a division, I undoubtedly should have voted for it; I am persuaded that the proposition it contains is perfectly consistent with the nature of the Constitution; nor do I conceive that it would lessen the glory and splendour of the achievements of the gallant Admiral, that they were recommended to the notice and favour of His Majesty by the voice of the Representatives of the People.

The original motion of thanks to Sir John Jervis was then car-

ried *nem. con.* with the most rapturous burst of satisfaction from every quarter of the House.

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS then moved, “ That the thanks of
 “ this House be given to the Vice-Admirals Charles Thompson
 “ and the honourable William Waldegrave, Rear-Admiral Wil-
 “ liam Parker, Commodore (now Rear-Admiral) Horatio Nelson;
 “ Captain (now Sir Robert) Calder (Knight), First Captain to
 “ Admiral Sir John Jervis, and to the several Captains and Offi-
 “ cers of the fleet under the command of the said Admiral, for their
 “ bravery and gallant conduct on the above-mentioned most glorious
 “ occasion; and that Admiral Sir John Jervis do signify the same
 “ to them.” Passed *nem. con.*

Mr. Secretary Dundas said, that in the next motion he was to make, he was confident that he should meet the sentiments of Sir John Jervis, who, on this occasion, had given the most flattering testimony to the good conduct and gallantry of the respective crews, and who must be desirous that those brave tars should be considered by the House of Commons as sharers of the merit, and partners of the glory of this brilliant and decisive victory. He therefore moved,
 “ That this House doth highly approve of, and acknowledge the
 “ services of the seamen, marines, and soldiers, on board the ships
 “ under the command of Admiral Sir John Jervis, in the late
 “ most glorious victory over the Spanish fleet; and that the Cap-
 “ tains of the several ships do signify the same to their respective
 “ crews, and do thank them for their gallant behaviour.” Passed *nem. con.*

Mr. GREY thought it necessary to say a few words on the subject of the victory gained by Sir John Jervis, in which he declared, he felt as much satisfaction as any gentleman in the House, both on account of the signal splendour of the action, and with respect to his personal friendship for the gallant Admiral. The extraordinary success which resulted from the conduct of Sir John Jervis, ought, in his opinion, to be marked with a distinction as great as it was possible to confer. He begged leave to notice, that such a measure was not without a precedent, as, in the year 1704, when the Duke of Marlborough gained a decisive victory over the army of Lewis the Fourteenth, an address was agreed to by the House of Commons, humbly praying that Her Majesty would take into her gracious consideration the propriety of carrying into execution some measure that might perpetuate the memory of the success which attended her arms under the command of his Grace.

Mr. SHERIDAN moved, “ That there be laid before the
 “ House, an account of the savings, if any, that had been made in

“ consequence of the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the situation and expences of certain offices.”—
Agreed to.

Also, “ An account of any relief or advantage that may be made to result to the Public in consequence of the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of the Crown Lands.”

Mr. Chancellor PITT did not see the necessity of producing the account called for, especially as no grounds had been adduced for the propriety of their production. There was no question of any immediate pecuniary relief being derived from the sale of the Crown Lands, though no inconsiderable advantage might reasonably be expected to arise to the Public from their gradual improvement.

Mr. COURTENAY moved for a copy of the application made in 1783, by the Tellers in Exchequer, to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, with regard to the mode of paying their salaries, and the proceedings held thereon.

Mr. Chancellor PITT expressed his surprize, how this subject could have occupied the honourable gentleman's mind for fourteen years, without his having intimated it till 1797, when the question could not be solved, without recurring to so remote a period. He confessed that he did not bear the particular occurrence in recollection.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that the reason why the right honourable gentleman seemed ignorant of the circumstances alluded to, was, doubtless, because he (Mr. Pitt) was not at that period First Lord of the Treasury. The motion made by him and his honourable friend were not without their object and their grounds; for they were connected with a motion respecting the retrenchment of sinecure places, which was expected to take place on Monday next.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that no distinct answer could be given to any gentleman on a detached fact, the connection of which could not now appear with a motion, with the particular views of which the House were as yet unacquainted.

Mr. GREY could not perceive the necessity of stating the particular views of the motion alluded to; neither did he see that any inconvenience could arise from the production of the accounts now called for. Similar motions for an inquiry into these abuses had frequently been made during the last fourteen years; but they were always unfortunately rejected.

Mr. HARRISON did not wish to withhold any of the motives

or views of his intended motion. He had more anxious, though, perhaps, not better-founded hopes, that now, at least, under the general pressure of distress that weighed upon the country, some alleviation might be derived from the abolition of the sinecure places; for some check must necessarily be soon put to the prodigality of Ministers, and their wanton profusion of the public money.

After a few observations from Mr. Courtenay and Mr. Sheridan, their respective motions were withdrawn.

Mr. BRAMSTON brought up the Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the state of the Bank, which was read as follows:

“ March 3, 1797: ”

“ The Committee appointed to examine and state the total amount of out-standing demands on the Bank of England, and likewise of the Funds for discharging the same; and to report the result thereof to the House, together with their opinion on the necessity of providing for the confirmation and continuance, for a time to be limited, of measures taken in pursuance of the minute of Council on the 26th of February last; and who are empowered to report their proceedings from time to time to the House; have, pursuant to the order of the House, proceeded to examine into the several matters referred to their consideration, and have unanimously agreed upon the following report, viz.

“ Your Committee have examined the total amount of out-standing demands on the Bank of England, and likewise of the Funds for discharging the same; and think it their duty, without loss of time, to state those total amounts, and to report the result thereof to the House.

“ Your Committee find upon such examination, that the total amount of out-standing demands on the Bank, on the 25th day of February last (to which day the accounts could be completely made up) was 13,770,390*l.*; and that the total amount of the Funds for discharging those demands (not including the permanent debt due from Government of 11,686,800*l.*, which bears an interest of three per cent.) was on the same 25th day of February last 17,597,280*l.*; and that the result is, that there was, on the 25th day of February last, a surplus of effects belonging to the Bank beyond the amount of their debts, amounting to the sum of 3,826,890*l.* exclusive of the above-mentioned permanent debt of 11,686,800*l.* due from Government.

“ And your Committee farther represent, that since the 25th of February last considerable issues have been made by the Bank in

bank notes, both upon Government securities and in discounting bills, the particulars of which could not immediately be made up; but as those issues appear to your Committee to have been made upon corresponding securities, taken with the usual care and attention, the actual balance in favour of the Bank did not appear to your Committee to have been thereby diminished."

The Report was ordered to be printed, and, on the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, ordered to be taken into consideration on Monday.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL said, that he could not avoid expressing his satisfaction at the Report of the Committee, which he was convinced would afford, not only consolation, but even impart energy to the House, and to the public mind. The Committee had proceeded to a faithful discharge of their duty in examining the first object pointed out to them by the order of the House, but they found the second an object of too much importance to come to an immediate decision. They would, however, with all possible dispatch, proceed to the consideration of it, though they could not fix a time for making their Report with respect to the causes which produced the Order of Council, and the necessity of providing for the confirmation and continuance of it. He had, however, the strongest reasons to think that there would appear the most satisfactory grounds to warrant in the first instance the necessity of the measure.

Mr. GREY declared, that as the right honourable gentleman had observed it was impossible to ascertain any particular time for the Report of the Committee on the second consideration, he should add that the Committee had lost no time in the inquiry which they had already made, and they would not lose time in their farther compliance with the order of the House.

Mr. FOX wished to know why the right honourable gentleman appeared to be convinced that the Report of the Committee would satisfy gentlemen on the necessity of the measure? How could the learned gentleman ascertain what would be the result of the examination, as the Committee had not yet entered upon the second branch of the inquiry?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL wished to be understood to give no opinion as to the causes.

Mr. GREY observed, that the House was in possession of all the information which had come before the Committee, but that nothing could be brought forward with respect to the necessity of the measure, as the causes had not been yet taken into discussion.

The order of the day being read for instituting an inquiry into

the conduct of Ministers, on occasion of the late attempt of the French to invade Ireland,

Mr. WHITBREAD prefaced his motion in a speech, of which the following is the substance:—After waiting with patience and respect to hear the very important and interesting business which, till this moment, has occupied the attention of the House, and which is so highly entitled to its notice, I now rise, Sir, to make that motion of which I gave notice some time ago; and which, important as it is, but for the more momentous business which engaged the entire and anxious consideration of the House on Monday last, I should on that evening have brought forward. Impressed as I am with the great weight and consequence attached to it, as involving in it the dearest and most valuable concerns of the country—late, Sir, as the hour is, at which I am to enter upon it, I must, nevertheless, intreat the indulgence of the House for a few moments before I proceed to the subject in question—till I deliver my individual sentiments, and pay my poor tribute of acknowledgment and praise to the glorious and splendid victory of which the House has this night been informed. No man in this House, Sir, or in this Country, can have a higher opinion than I have, of the courage, the gallantry, the skill, and ability of the gallant Admiral, and the Officers and Seamen acting under him, who have achieved an action so eminently glorious. No man can be more desirous of conferring on him and them every praise, and every exalted distinction which such brilliant conduct deserves. At the same time, Sir, that I say this, I must beg leave to observe, that such glorious annals of the events are by no means unprecedented in the British navy. However, Sir, willing and desirous as I am to allow to this gallant action every possible degree of merit, and every praise which the most enthusiastic admirer of extraordinary victories can wish for or desire, I must beg leave to call the attention of the House to the circumstances which have just been related to us, concerning the situation and number of ships with which this gallant Admiral has acquired so great, so brilliant, and so decisive a superiority. The inequality of ships on our part, under the command of Admiral Sir John Jervis, is very great, almost, Sir, in a proportion of two to one. While, therefore, we view the splendour of this victory with every degree of admiration, and joyful exultation it so eminently deserves, it becomes us seriously to consider, whether the circumstance alone does not loudly call on us to institute an inquiry into the conduct of the First Lord of the Admiralty, for his neglect of reinforcing the squadron which was in a service so distant as that of the Mediterranean, when he knew that the Spaniards

were added to the list of our naval adversaries. In my opinion, in the same degree of proportion in which we praise and admire the glorious victory which Sir John Jervis has obtained—a victory, the consequences of which must be so valuable and important to the first interests of this country; in an equal degree ought we to affix blame and culpability for so gross and glaring a neglect as that of leaving him with such a prodigious inferiority of force. We are told, Sir, by the right honourable Secretary of State, in the detail which he has just given the House of this fortunate and gallant achievement, that with fifteen ships of the line Admiral Sir John Jervis has defeated a fleet of the Spaniards, which consisted of twenty-seven line of battle ships, of which he has taken four. Fortunate and glorious as this action has proved to the reputation of the British navy, and those who command and conduct it, we cannot but call to mind how dreadful would have been the reverse of the fate of that memorable day, had victory declared itself in favour of the enemy. What, Sir, at this moment, must have been the sensations of the people of this country? What would they have said, if, in spite of the bravery, the discipline, the judgement, and glory of Sir John Jervis—for glory, I maintain, Sir, does not always consist in success—what would they have said, if, in defiance of all those superior abilities for which the character of the British Officers and Seamen are so eminently conspicuous, the reverse of the pleasing picture of this brilliant victory had this night been held up to us, and we had been told that Sir John Jervis had been defeated, in consequence of the immense superiority of numbers in the fleet which the enemy brought into action against us? I have no doubt, Sir, but the voice of the country at large would, undoubtedly and inevitably, have called loudly and universally for an IMPEACHMENT of the First Lord of the Admiralty. I think, Sir, that this House would, in such a case, have been pretty ready to join the voice of the People, and to second them in so necessary a measure. The unparalleled success which has attended the skill and bravery of our fleet, by no means alter the state of the question. It was the duty of the First Lord of the Admiralty, and of His Majesty's Ministers in general, to have taken care that our fleet should bear some degree of proportion to that of the enemy; and therefore it evidently appears that the inferiority being so very great, it is high time an inquiry into the conduct of Ministers should immediately take place. I hope, Sir, the time is not far distant, nay, I flatter myself it is very near indeed, when this House will think it necessary to go seriously and actively into an extensive and deep inquiry into the state of the nation at large. Such an inquiry has long been wanted. The very

momentous information which has been laid before the House, and which has engaged their most serious and deliberate, as well as anxious consideration, since Monday last, shews, beyond a possibility of doubt, the inevitable necessity of inquiry upon the broadest and most efficacious basis. This inquiry has often been moved for since the commencement of this destructive and disastrous war, by several of my honourable friends near me, but has as constantly been evaded and warded off by the Minister, and those who have supported him hitherto in this House. But the face of affairs is, within one short week, most wonderfully changed indeed. The public credit of this country, which hitherto had always stood on such superior ground, has become shook in its very foundation. The mismanagement of His Majesty's Ministers has become notorious to every beholder, and the cry of inquiry into their conduct is not now confined to the Members of Opposition in this House alone, but is gone abroad, and is now echoed back upon us from every corner of the kingdom: it is become the awful, the universal, and the united wish and desire of the whole people. Though this inquiry, therefore, has been so often refused, I think His Majesty's Ministers cannot much longer keep it off; and as a preliminary or harbinger to that inquiry on a large scale, which I have just now hinted at, I hope and trust that the House will this night agree to the motion which I shall have the honour to submit to their consideration; and that they will agree to the limited inquiry I have now in view, as to the conduct of His Majesty's Ministers, with respect to the late attempt of the French to invade our sister kingdom of Ireland. It is extremely apparent and well known to every man in this country, of the least degree of information, that the expences of the present war have exceeded, beyond any degree of comparison, the expences of all former wars in which this country has ever been unfortunately engaged, from the earliest periods of our history. It is almost incredible to relate, but it is, alas, not less strange and lamentable than it is true, that with a fleet, consisting of upwards of five hundred vessels of war of various denominations, at this moment in commission, the captures, within the last three months, of our merchant ships, have been greater and more numerous than can be furnished in any three months which have ever preceded them. In this immense number of ships of war, I have just mentioned no less, Sir, than ninety ships of the line are in the European Seas. With such a force, how those captures could have been made, except from the culpable neglect or misconduct of His Majesty's Ministers, I am at a loss to imagine. The fact, however, is, unfortunately for this country, but too well ascertained to admit

of a doubt. I now come, Sir, to speak of that particular neglect and misconduct which more immediately gives rise to the present motion. The first information on authority which this House received relative to the intention of the enemy to invade this country, was conveyed to us by His Majesty's speech on the opening of the present session. Measures were in consequence adopted by His Majesty's Ministers, in order to repel this threatened attack upon us at our own doors. Several bills were passed for putting the country into the strongest and best possible posture of defence. Whether those measures were the best that might have been adopted, is not now the subject of inquiry. In forming a grand and general plan of defence, I can scarcely believe, however, that any gentleman now present, or, indeed, in the whole country, will differ in opinion with me, when I say that Ministers ought to have considered, and been prepared for the defence of Ireland also. Information had been received through various channels, that Ireland was one object of the meditated attack of the enemy. Had any measures of the smallest efficacy, I ask, been taken towards the defence of Ireland when the attempt to invade it was actually made? I believe not. However, Sir, I do not desire that my word alone should be taken on the subject; I only entreat the attention of the House to the real situation of that country when the enemy were on the very coast, and that from the letter of the Commander in Chief in that quarter of it, General Dalrymple, and I will then leave every Member of the House to draw his own inferences and conclusions upon the point. It appears, Sir, in this gentleman's letter, that instead of any effectual measures having been previously taken for an efficient defence, every thing remained to be done. He says, after mentioning the appearance of the enemy in Bantry Bay, that he will immediately proceed to put every thing into the most speedy and proper train, for the purpose of frustrating the design of the enemy. Is this being in a proper state of defence against such an active and enterprising enemy as we have to contend with? If it is, I am no judge of those matters. But, Sir, it appears by the most authentic information received from thence, that there was not any thing like an adequate force for defence in that part of the country. There were not at the time more, if so many, as three thousand regular troops to oppose the whole force of the French. The city of Cork was, therefore, in the most imminent peril of falling into their hands, had not that God alone, who has so often favoured and protected this country, prevented it. In that city of Cork, Sir, I almost shudder to relate, were contained stores and provisions of various kinds to the amount—but what signifies the amount, it is a trifling

consideration in a matter of this immense magnitude. The amount, however, as I have been informed from authority the most creditable and respectable, was upwards of a million sterling in value, nearly, if not quite, a million and an half. Among those stores, Sir, were all the provisions intended for the use of the British navy for the next year ; so that had they been taken or destroyed, the British navy, glorious and splendid as its achievements have been at all times, when called into action, would have been for a year to come altogether annihilated. This, Sir, is a consideration which, when weighed and combined with the joyful news this night communicated to us, cannot fail to make a sensible impression on the mind of every Member, when he reflects on the dreadful consequences which might have followed from this defenceless state of the sister kingdom. I must now, Sir, entreat the patience and indulgence of the House while I go through a regular statement of the motions of the French fleet, and those of our own, from the time of the enemy quitting the harbour of Brest, and a short period antecedent thereto. Admiral Colpoys, with a fleet of fourteen or fifteen sail of the line, was lying off Brest harbour for some weeks. The French fleet, however, in defiance of this, sailed from Brest on the 15th of December. On the 20th of that month they arrived on the coast of Ireland, and some of them dropped anchor in Bantry Bay. I have here to observe, that previous to that, and during the time that Admiral Colpoys was with his squadron lying off Brest, Admiral Richery, with six French ships of the line, passed the squadron of Admiral Colpoys, and got safe into Brest. On the 21st, the enemy cast anchor in Bantry Bay ; so that they were at sea, and on the coast of Ireland, from the 18th of December to the 6th of January. On the 20th of December news arrived in England, that the French fleet had quitted Brest. From the 23d to the 25th, the wind was favourable for the squadron under the command of Lord Bridport to have sailed. It continued fair on the 26th and 27th, after which it came a-head, and the fleet could not sail for some days. On the 31st, intelligence came to this country that the French fleet was off the coast of Ireland, and on the same day, exactly, Admiral Colpoys, with the fleet under his command, arrived at Portsmouth. The reasons given for his return with this squadron are various and contradictory. One was, that his force was not sufficient to encounter that of the enemy. If that was a true reason, it furnishes an additional cause for inquiry into the conduct of Ministers, and of the First Lord of the Admiralty in particular. What, when they had received information of the active and extensive preparations going

forward at Brest, shall we be told, after the large sums consumed in Secret-service money, and with the immense navy in our possession, they ought not to have sent out fresh ships to reinforce that Squadron? It is absurd on the face of it. Admiral Colpoys, however, must have received intelligence of the sailing of the Brest fleet. Did he sail in pursuit of them? Did he sail towards the coast of Portugal after them, where it might, perhaps, have occurred to him they were gone? No. Did he sail after them towards the coast of Ireland? No: he sailed directly for Portsmouth, where he arrived on the very day that information was brought they were on the Irish coast. Another reason which has been given for the return of this Squadron into port was, that it was short of provisions. In every view of every reason for its return the most glaring misconduct and culpability stare us in the face. Is it possible to conceive that in all the time Admiral Colpoys lay with his Squadron off Brest, either fresh ships properly victualled could not have been sent to relieve him, or transports with provisions have been forwarded to re-victual his fleet? The question answers for itself. In every thing I have said, Sir, respecting Admiral Colpoys, and the fleet under his command, or what I may hereafter say respecting Lord Bridport, or any other of the gallant officers I may have occasion to name in the course of this debate, I beg leave to assure the House, that I have the highest respect for their several characters; and that I do not mean, in the slightest degree, to utter even a hint to their disadvantage. I mention matters in detail, as a statement of events, just as they occurred, and have no doubt but every one of those officers will be able to give the most satisfactory explanation of his own conduct. There is, Sir, also, another circumstance which occurred, and which appears very extraordinary. Admiral Elphinstone arrived in Ireland, in the Monarch of 74 guns, accompanied by a frigate. He gave notice to the Castle of Dublin, I believe, that he, with the ship under his command, and with that frigate, was ready to join any other force that might be allotted for the purpose to go in search of the enemy. Admiral Kingsmill, who is stationed at Cork, also issued orders for several frigates and the Monarch to sail in quest of the enemy. Yet, on the 3d of January, we are informed that Admiral Elphinstone arrived at Spithead, with the Monarch, without having seen any of the enemy's fleet. On the same day Lord Bridport, with the Squadron under his command, sailed from thence. He went first to Brest, which I have not the least doubt appeared to him to be the most likely track for falling in with the enemy's ships. In that idea, however, he was disappointed; for his Lordship, after some days waiting there to no effect

or purpose, thought it necessary to shape his course to the coast of Ireland. In this farther pursuit he was equally unsuccessful, and on the 3d of February he returned to Spithead with the fleet under his command, without having fallen in with, or even seen one single ship belonging to the shattered, dispersed, and divided fleet of the enemy. Thus the designs of the enemy were only frustrated by the winds, and the safety of Ireland entirely abandoned to the chance of the elements. Such, Sir, is the regular statement of events as they successfully occurred; and these are the grounds which I have stated, on which I mean to found the motion which I shall this night submit to the consideration of the House. Numerous as well as various are the objections which have from time to time been made to any and every species of inquiry pending a war. The intelligence which may be conveyed to the enemy, in consequence of many circumstances relative to our situation and resources being divulged, and which might be turned greatly to our disadvantage and injury. The detaining gallant, active, and experienced Officers, from their respective commands, when they might be so much more honourably and profitably employed for the public service. Many other reasons have been urged which it is here at this moment unnecessary to repeat. Notwithstanding all this, Sir, we have an instance of an inquiry having been granted towards the close of the last war, in which the right honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Chancellor Pitt) acted a very considerable part, in moving for various papers in support of the motion. I am extremely sorry, Sir, that by my not being able, from the weighty and important reasons I have assigned, to bring forward the present motion on Monday last, several of the gallant Officers, whose names I have mentioned, have left town. Lord Bridport was, I believe, then in town. Lord Hugh Seymour was then in town. I beg pardon; I am informed his Lordship is now in the House. I am glad of it; I could heartily wish that every Officer concerned was present. However, Sir, if the House should think proper to grant the inquiry, we can examine such Officers immediately as are at present in town, and take the earliest opportunity of examining such of the others as may be necessary, when their absence from their duty will best permit. I will not, therefore, Sir, take up any more of the time of the House, by making any farther observations on the subject; and I think I cannot conclude in more apt or proper terms than by using the words of a celebrated predecessor of yours, Sir, in that Chair, who, after the failure of the fleet in the Mediterranean, in the year 1744, when he presented the bill of supplies, &c. the highest authority in this country, "that in circum-

stances so dismal and distressing, the House ought to exercise the highest, the best, and the dearest of their privileges, that of inquiring into the application of every part of the supplies." I therefore move, Sir, "That it be referred to a Committee, to inquire into the conduct of Ministers, with respect to the late attempt of the French in the invasion of Ireland."

Mr. Secretary DUNDAS, in reply, spoke to the following effect:—I am very glad the honourable gentleman has brought forward the discussion of this important transaction in the manner he has done, because it affords me an opportunity of examining the subject in a regular way, and as I trust, of refuting at the same time the various ill-founded reports and misrepresentations which have been since industriously circulated about it. The mode which I intend to adopt as the most clear, satisfactory, and convincing, will be by troubling the House with a short and simple narrative of facts. But before I proceed to do that, it is necessary for me to dismiss the various topics from the recollection of the House with which the honourable gentleman has introduced his proposed inquiry into the circumstances attending the menaced invasion of Ireland by the enemy. I beg to be understood, however, that in discussing the prefatory matter which the honourable gentleman has connected with the subject of his inquiry, I never wish to banish from my mind the brilliant and memorable victory of Sir John Jervis, whatever may have been the nature of his situation in that victory, because it was that situation which had so supereminently added, by its contrast, to his glory. Let that situation, however, be what it might, there was no misconduct in the Admiralty, nor was any blame thereby to be imputed to it, as I trust I shall presently evince. The honourable gentleman has inculpated the Admiralty for not allowing Sir John Jervis a larger force, and a force more adequate to that of the enemy, which he defeated. Now, if after the statement I am about to make, to remove that inculpation, the honourable gentleman still finds any solid reason to accuse the Admiralty, he may bring his accusations forward at a proper time. But the honourable gentleman has certainly been misinformed when he undertook to say that Sir John Jervis had only fifteen sail of the line upon that station, for his actual appointment consisted of twenty sail of the line, besides frigates, which with the knowledge of the skill and bravery, and the zeal and ardour of the sailors under his command, might be deemed equal to any force which he would probably have to contend with. But it is to be recollected, that, out of this allotted number, he left two behind him at Lisbon, in consequence of accidents upon the bar there, two more in the Straits of Gibraltar,

and another he sent home. If he had retained his whole complement, therefore, he would have had twenty sail of the line in all, besides frigates. It was moreover the intention of the Admiralty, just before the arrival of the glorious news which they have this day received, to have sent him a farther reinforcement of five sail of the line: which ships, I believe, are now ready, or very nearly ready, for their destination. So whatever might have been the force of a fleet, either French or Spanish, in the Mediterranean, or the Straits of Gibraltar, I trust no person ever heard Sir John Jervis say he should not be a match for them. Besides, I farthermore hope the honourable gentleman and the House will be pleased to admit, that no culpability can attach to the Admiralty for suffering Sir John Jervis to remain upon that station with fifteen sail of the line, inasmuch as they had previously heard that he was not sought for and pursued by the enemy, but, on the contrary, as I have before stated, that he sought, pursued, and conquered the enemy, and was consequently not only conscious of, but proved the strength and capability of the force he commanded. Nevertheless, if this be not satisfactory to the House and to the honourable gentleman, I shall be very willing, at a future opportunity, to give a farther explanation; I now come distinctly to the discussion of the question itself, which I acknowledge to have been moved by the honourable gentleman in a very honourable, and a very proper manner. Upon this point I call for the attention of the House, and undertake, upon the ground where I now stand, not to leave a particle of doubt in the mind of any man who hears me, that not the smallest blame was imputable either to the civil or military part engaged in that transaction. I am sensible that I am talking in bold language, and therefore shall demand, not as a favour, but as a right, that gentlemen will dismiss every kind of prejudice from their minds, and listen to me with attention. The honourable gentleman has stated, that we were obliged to the elements for the dispersion of the enemy's fleet upon the Irish coast. It is so far true, indeed, that we were obliged to the elements; but let it be remembered also on the other hand, that to the elements, and to the elements only, the French have been indebted for every part of that expedition: To prove this assertion, I shall not have occasion to go far back, in point of date. Only there is one difficulty to contend with; in the admission of which, I trust there will be but one sentiment, namely, the impossibility of laying before the House all the documents which Government is possessed of. If that were to be done, there would immediately be an end to the security of the public service, and to the safety of every individual. Does any gentleman doubt it? I

think it is impossible ; and I shall therefore enter that as a general proposition ; I say, a general proposition, and not as one which I purpose or desire to make available now, for screening any misconduct for inquiry. My reason for doing so is plain, which I declare, that I have no hesitation in saying, as I hope and trust no gentleman will have any hesitation in agreeing with me, that although prior to the sailing of the French fleet from Brest, the Admiralty had received intelligence that such a fleet was in preparation, it was not positively known whether it was intended to sail against Portugal or Ireland, or some part of the British dominions. Sometimes it was rumoured to be intended against Gibraltar, and at others it was expected to be prepared for an attack upon some of our more distant possessions. The Admiralty, however, had some reason to believe, that either Portugal or Ireland was the object of its destination ; and no man, I conjecture, however authentic his information might be, would have been bold enough to decide, that that which did not take place was not the most probable. There are obvious reasons, which it would be very indiscreet in me to publish, why an invasion of Portugal did not take place. I shall, therefore, proceed to determine whether Ministers adopted such measures as the nature of circumstances seemed to require ? I assert, that they took the properest and best possible measures which could be taken with their uncertainty of the enemy's designs ; for it is to be observed, that they had not only to watch the hostile armaments of the enemy, and provide a sufficient force in every quarter, which they deemed assailable to resist them, but they were compelled moreover to provide a large and adequate force at the same time for the protection of our outward and homeward bound fleets. Let gentlemen separate these three circumstances, and they will act wisely ; for the proper way to consider it is, not as an abstract, but a complex question ; and since the consideration of every question must depend upon the circumstances which surround it, the inquiry will then be, whether or not the best measures, under the consideration of all the circumstances, were adopted. In reply to this, I have no hesitation now to say, that Government thought it the wisest plan to separate the fleets into different divisions. One fleet was stationed off Brest to watch the enemy, and intercept the sailing of the expedition ; and another fleet was stationed at home to relieve the fleet off Brest, if necessary, or to pursue the enemy if it should sail, or attend to any exigencies which might possibly arise. This was surely the wisest and most effectual arrangement which the uncertainty of the enemy's intentions could possibly admit. The fleet off Brest, under the command of Admiral Thompson, was put under the command

of Admiral Colpoys on the 9th of October ; and here I shall beg leave to read a copy of the orders issued from the Admiralty to Admiral Thompson, from whom Admiral Colpoys received his instructions. [Here Mr. Dundas read the orders alluded to.] For the sake of impressing these orders more forcibly upon the attention of the House, I shall beg leave to recapitulate the substance of them. Admiral Colpoys was to take care of a partial disposition of the British fleet under his command off Brest, in case of a dispersion of the enemy in sailing from that port. He was to hover about their coast, and watch over them till they did sail ; and, provided they steered to the southward, he was immediately to dispatch a cutter to Admiral Vandempt at Lisbon, to give communication of the same ; or, provided they steered to the northward, he was to dispatch a cutter to Admiral Kingsmill, at Cork, at the same time taking care to give the earliest intelligence at home. Surely it was impossible to select any orders in preference to these ; at least, I cannot imagine that, considering all the circumstances of the case, any better could have been adopted. I must now correct a statement which has gone abroad, that no frigate nor squadron was appointed by the Admiralty to watch over the preparations of the enemy in Brest harbour, and give an account of the same to Admiral Colpoys, as circumstances should require. For it is a positive fact, that Sir Edward Pellew was appointed, and did actually cruise in Brest harbour. He was there the very day the armament was in motion ; he was there the very day it sailed too, and he conveyed to Admiral Colpoys' look-out ship, the Marlborough, an account of their progress and their sailing ; and he sent a farther intelligence of the loss of one of the enemy's ships (*Les Droits de l'Homme*) in coming out of the harbour. So it appears, that what ought to have been done was done. But notwithstanding the diligence, intelligence, and skill of Admiral Colpoys, and notwithstanding the experience, courage, and ability of Sir Edward Pellew, their exertions were in vain. Though Sir Edward Pellew sent off intelligence that the enemy sailed on the 16th, it was not till the 24th of December that the look-out ship, the Marlborough, received the account of it : for the state of the weather was such, that it was impossible for Admiral Colpoys even to keep his own fleet under his observation ; and the air was so hazy and so foggy, that the fog guns were continually fired. How then does this explanation stand ? Has any man a doubt of Sir Edward Pellew's inclination and ability, if possible, to have given the intelligence to Admiral Colpoys that the enemy had put to sea ? Or has any man a doubt that Admiral Colpoys was not desirous to see it ? He could not be unwilling to receive

it, because he had a fleet superior to the enemy under his command. He had four three-deckers, and the enemy had not one. If there was one spark of fire in their dispositions, therefore, or one drop of British blood in their veins, both Sir Edward Pellew and Admiral Colpoys must have been anxious to intercept the enemy, and have suffered great regret in their disappointment. I do not know Admiral Colpoys personally, but I know him by character to be an able and a virtuous man; and he who is a virtuous man, will also be a gallant man. I have heard from the best authority, that no man could suffer more torture in his mind than that brave Admiral did during the six days in which he was cut off from all intelligence of the enemy; and I am confident, that during all that time it was not for want of exertion, gallantry, or ability, that Sir Edward Pellew was not able to apprise him of their situation. Yet with all the known ability, gallantry, and exertion of both officers, it was the 24th of December before the news of the sailing of the enemy reached Admiral Colpoys' Squadron. What must have been his situation, if he had met them on the 17th, encumbered with troops and transports, without one three-decker, while he had four, and possessing neither the discipline, the skill, the gallantry, nor zeal of the forces under him? I have no more to do than to ask the House, whether, burning with ardour and ambition as they were, the most glorious achievements might not have been expected? In this moment of exultation, I am certainly entitled to some credit when I speak thus confidently of two officers of known ability, gallantry, and exertion. With regard to the enemy's sailing, the House is now in the real possession of the case, but so uncertain were both the officers alluded to with respect to the actual views of the enemy, that both Sir Edward Pellew and Admiral Colpoys believed they were undoubtedly destined for Portugal, and Sir Edward Pellew sent off to Admiral Vandeput, at Lisbon, to give him notice thereof. But Admiral Colpoys knowing, for the first time, on the 24th of December, that the enemy had sailed on the 16th, and there having been a hurricane on the 17th, he believed the French ships might have been dispersed in the storm, and regulated his conduct accordingly. He thought it the wisest resolution not to follow them to Portugal or Ireland, because he was uncertain of their destination, and he therefore kept his station, on account of the chance of interrupting the return of all or part of the fleet in case of a dispersion by the storm. He recollected also, that the circumstance of the enemy's having sailed would be known by the Admiralty, and that, by keeping his station, he should have the means of receiving such authentic intelligence as he could not otherwise expect. If he was not

able to keep his station by the prevalence of the South-west wind off Brest, he was to rendezvous off the Lizard Point; and therefore by keeping as closely upon his station as he possibly could, he was provided for both alternatives, either for intercepting the enemy's fleet on the return of the whole or part to Brest, or receiving such an account of them from the Admiralty as might enable him to pursue them. Accordingly, being unable to keep his station off Brest, the fleet returned to the Lizard Point, in hopes of receiving some information, and was soon after driven up Channel by the gales of wind, while the French found their way home in the mean time, though the hurricane still blew. Now no man could say this was not the wisest and best measure which could be adopted; for Admiral Colpoys was either to say, "Shall I remain here contending against a hurricane, with the danger of disabling the ships entrusted to my command, and thereby render them incapable of engaging with the enemy if I should happen to fall in with them; or shall I get into the nearest ports where I may obtain shelter, and from which, if the winds be favourable, there can be little difference in point of time for sailing?" The last was certainly the best and wisest resolution; and it reflected no discredit on the Admiral for choosing it. So far with regard to the nature of Admiral Colpoys' orders, and the propriety of his discretion: I think I have shewn that both were highly justifiable. The next charge which the honourable gentleman made, and which he stated as a cause of the return of Admiral Colpoys' fleet to port, was the want of provisions. I am ready to admit that his squadron remained longer on its station than was originally supposed necessary, and that it was not relieved so soon as the Admiralty intended. But I must entreat the attention of the House, or I shall not be able to make gentlemen understand it as they ought. I am ready to admit that the squadron stationed off Brest was not relieved so soon as the Admiralty had intended: and if I am asked why, I will explain the reason. Sir Roger Curtis should have been in port at the beginning of November, but did not return till the 18th. The reason of his delay was, that he had been appointed to cruise off Rochfort, where he remained a fortnight longer than was at first thought necessary, to intercept the return of Richery's squadron from Newfoundland. Sir Roger Curtis's squadron consisted of seven sail of the line, which, soon after their return to port, were to have been sent to the relief of the fleet off Brest; but the wind was so adverse as to render it impossible for them to come to Spithead before the 18th of November; and that was the real cause why the fleet off Brest was not relieved as soon as was intended. When I say this,

however, or that Admiral Colpoys was unable to pursue the French fleet, I desire to have it understood, that I do not doubt he would have pursued the French to Portugal, or Ireland, if he had been certain of their destination ; and I really believe, that his continuing on his station proceeded from no deficiency of provision, but from his ignorance of the course the enemy had taken, and from the prevalence of the adverse winds which had forced him off his station, and driven him up Channel. Upon examination, I had found that there was on board the fleet under Admiral Colpoys' command, wine and spirits for forty-two days, peas and oatmeal for thirty-six days, biscuits for seven weeks, beef for six weeks, pork for seven weeks, and water for thirty-four days. [Here some of the gentlemen from the opposite side inquired what the quantity of wood and coals was.] I do not see any account of wood and coals, but I cannot suppose they were comparatively less. I am perfectly well apprized how speedily reports of this nature are propagated, and how very erroneous they generally are ; for some short time ago it was rumoured in the city, that the Powerful man of war, which lately put into Cork, was one of the ships belonging to this station, and that at the time she put into Cork, she had only three or four days water on board : whereas she went to sea, victualled for foreign service, but came into port disabled by great stress of weather, having water and provisions on board at the same time to last a six-months voyage. I beg that this single instance may be received as a proof of what sort of reliance may be placed upon such rumours ; for it is certain that Admiral Colpoys did not return to port on account of an absolute want of provisions, but because he was not able to pursue the enemy from the uncertainty of their course, and because he was driven by violent gales of wind up Channel. I now come to the next stage of the honourable gentleman's observations, which is the interval between the arrival of Admiral Colpoys, and the sailing of Lord Bridport on the 31st of December. Sir Edward Pellew made every exertion in his power, and according to his instructions, sent an account to the Admiralty immediately of the sailing of the French fleet. This account reached the Admiralty on the 20th of December ; and I will now shew, by reading a copy of the Admiralty orders, sent off immediately upon the receipt of that intelligence to Lord Bridport, whether there was any deficiency on the part of the Admiral in making the most prompt and vigorous exertions : I should observe, that, previous to the receipt of this intelligence on the 19th of December, Lord Bridport hoisted his flag on board his own ship to prepare for the relief of Admiral Colpoys off Brest. Lord Bridport received information on the morning of the 21st of Decem-

ber from the Admiralty of the sailing of the French fleet from Brest, and immediately returned for answer, that all the fleet would be ready four days after, namely, on the 25th. [Here Mr. Dundas read the orders of the Admiralty, issued to Lord Bridport on the 21st, and another order issued two days after, counteracting some part of the first orders, and desiring him to proceed off Cape Clear immediately.] As I wish to impress these orders strongly upon the recollection of the House, I shall follow the mode I before adopted in stating the orders issued to Admiral Colpoys, and recapitulate them. Lord Bridport, by the orders of the 21st, is required and directed to put to sea without any loss of time, to drop down Channel, and call at Plymouth for the *Raisonable* to join Admiral Colpoys upon his station, and take his ships, if he did not fall in with the enemy, to make a show off Brest; if he found no fleet there, to proceed off Cape Clear; and then, provided he could get no information, to return again to Brest, by way of intercepting them on their return. The orders of the 23d, however, in addition to the others, required and directed Lord Bridport, if the *Raisonable* was not ready, to join his squadron, to proceed immediately without her, to make a show off Brest; and if he received any information of the enemy off Ireland, to make Cape Clear his chief object. Lord Bridport having received these orders on the 25th, weighed anchor and went down Channel; but it so happened, from the eagerness and zeal of all the crews, that an accident took place in getting out of port, and one or two of the ships ran foul of each other, by which means the *Prince* was damaged, and prevented from proceeding with the squadron; but the other ship gave signal that she was ready; and so there was no worse effect from this accident than the disabling one vessel. This happened on the 25th; and notwithstanding what the honourable gentleman had stated, he was either misinformed, or totally mistaken; for from that time subsequently to their sailing, there was not a fair wind. The wind blew strong at S. E. and there was a high-flowing tide operating equally adverse against them, so much so, that after every exertion, it was simply impossible for them to reach St. Helens on the 26th or 27th. [Some gentlemen on the opposite side appeared to discredit the impossibility of getting down Channel with a S. E. wind.] Gentlemen need not throw out the signals, for they must soon take them down again. I have a letter in my hand from Sir Peter Parker, the Port Admiral at Plymouth, dated the 26th, which states, that such a hard gale was blowing at S. E. as to prevent any communication with the fleet, and the master shipwright had informed him that he was not able in consequence to send any body off on board the *Prince*. Another letter

from the same Port Admiral, dated the 27th, states, that the West-India convoy was not able to sail on account of the S. E. winds, nor could the Sans Pareille, the Formidable, the Mars, the Prince George, the Valiant, and Colossus, join the Admiral and the other eight ships belonging to the fleet at St. Helens. On the 28th, another letter from the same Port Admiral states, that the Eurydice had arrived with strong easterly winds, and that although all the six ships mentioned in his former letter had attempted to join Lord Bridport at St. Helens, the Colossus and the Valiant were the only ships able to do so. A letter from Lord Bridport himself, dated the 28th of December, mentions, that Sir Peter Parker had communicated orders by the telegraph for him to sail without the Prince, which was to go into dock again to be repaired; and he concludes by stating, that the winds are still against him. On this subject, therefore, I fancy I am able to offer a little naval knowledge, as well as the honourable gentleman. I have the authority of Lord Bridport himself and six British officers struggling for glory, in addition to that of the Port Admiral, besides two Commanders of frigates, that the wind would not suffer them to proceed down Channel; and I do not know what can be more satisfactory than ten such positive evidences. I have not named the officers, because I am well persuaded the House will agree with me that not one of them would require more than one signal to sail on such an occasion. The impossibility therefore of the fleets getting out to sea is, I trust, put beyond any farther disputation. Now if the case be as I have stated, it will bring the question to a short compass. It may possibly be agitated in another shape; and since it is evident that Lord Bridport had reached St. Helens with eight sail of the line, it may be asked why he waited for the other six, and why, under such circumstances, he did not immediately proceed with those eight? Let those who put such questions accidentally to themselves, or to their neighbours, recollect, that neither Lord Bridport, nor the Admiralty, at that time, had the smallest intelligence of the enemy's being in Bantry Bay! nor had they any certain idea of their destination. Is there a man, who knows the character of the gallant Admiral in question, would even suspect him from any motives of being negligent or tardy, when danger calls for his exertion? His great fault, if it be a fault, is an over-ardour. He is as incapable of loitering behind in the hour of peril, as he is of sinking his own ship to the bottom of the sea. Besides, he had reason to expect that Admiral Colpoys was watching the enemy; nor did the matter rest there, for it could not be expected that Lord Bridport should sail with only eight out of sixteen sail of the line, when he had no

idea of the strength or number of the enemy's fleet, and when the next tide was likely to bring him down six such capital ships as those above mentioned. Lord Bridport is as arduous and sanguine as any man; but such a proceeding would have betrayed a want of intelligence and judgement, which no ardour, no confidence, no zeal, no bravery, could justify.

So far, then, I have proved in clear, distinct, and, as I hope and trust, in satisfactory terms, that neither the Admiralty had been remiss in any point of public duty in giving proper orders, nor Lord Bridport, or any other Officers, in zeal and duty, to carry those orders into execution. Though the French fleet arrived off the coast of Ireland upon the 21st of December, no intelligence was received of them in this country till the 31st. I have stated what the orders were which were sent from the Admiralty to Lord Bridport, immediately upon receiving the intelligence that the enemy had sailed from Brest; and I must now state, that the Admiralty took the chance of sending to Admiral Colpoys on the station where they expected to find him off the Lizard, in case of any adverse winds removing him from the French coast. Lord Bridport has hitherto been not only a gallant, but a fortunate Admiral; and yet it so happened, that although Admiral Colpoys had been hovering with his squadron off Brest to intercept the enemy upon their leaving that harbour; although Lord Bridport afterwards proceeded off Cape Clear and the Irish coast to intercept them on their return; and although the Duke and the Majestic, with two other ships of war, were sent in search of them, they were so covered by the fog and fortune as to escape them all. Still, however, they did not so escape as not to suffer for their temerity, for they lost in this rash expedition two ships of the line, four frigates, one corvette, and four transports, besides four or five hundred men; a catastrophe which, unless to men who do not value life, and are absolutely driven to despair, does not afford any thing very tempting to hazard another storm. I believe I have now answered, if not controverted, most of the facts which the honourable gentleman has stated; and the result of my discussion is, that not any single article of blame is imputable to the Admiralty for the neglect of giving orders, nor any culpability to the conduct of the Officers in the execution of them. There have been some disappointments in the failure I confess. I, for one, exulted in the prospect; and if I have suffered some chagrin from the disappointment, I speedily banished it from my mind, because I knew no blame was to be attributed to any one. The honourable gentleman said that Ireland was saved by the elements; but he should have remembered, the

same wind which dispersed the enemy, prevented our fleets from intercepting them. If ever any enterprize could prove the folly of invading Ireland, that must have done it; if ever any expedition could prove the necessity of being provided with a superior fleet than what they had for such an undertaking, that must have done it; and if ever there were a concurrence of miracles, it was surely at that period. If Lord Bridport had met them, could any man entertain a doubt of their destruction? The honourable gentleman seemed to think, that when a great hostile armament invaded any country, the business is done. I must tell him, the difficulties are but just begun. An enemy requires a superior fleet on such occasions to cover their debarkation, which is always effected with panic and confusion, else they are likely to have their provisions cut off, and other necessaries. So far, therefore, from laying aside confidence in our naval affairs, I wish to continue it, but not at the expence of a blind and indiscreet security. If there were one chance in a hundred, the enemy have had the benefit of that chance, which never may recur again. I hope any man who hears me, or communicates with any person out of doors, will never again admit a spirit of despondency. Let them lay aside all such childish dismay, which unnerves both the body and the soul, and annihilates the strength and energy of the country. Exclusive of our naval forces in the East and West Indies, the North Seas, and the Mediterranean, we have fifty sail of the line for the defence of Great Britain and Ireland, and upwards of two hundred thousand men under arms. Invasion, therefore, is nothing but a bug-bear; yet I would not have men relax in their precautions on one hand, nor would I have them despond on the other. Thus far, I trust then, that the government and force of this country have been libelled and calumniated. I do not wish to prevent inquiry; but, upon a full consideration of the documents, I think the honourable gentleman will not find himself warranted to persist in his motion, because, I trust, he is satisfied that no blame is imputable to the Admiralty or Officers; I shall therefore move the previous question, in order to move for the production of those papers relative to the transaction, that gentlemen, after perusing them, may examine whether the aspersions be well founded. Mr. Dundas then moved the previous question; and at the same time apologized to the House for the necessary length of his speech.

Mr. GREY said, that, after the very long statement which the right honourable gentleman who had just spoken had given to the House, and which he, doubtless, thought himself obliged to give, he should be sorry to detain the House longer than appeared to him

to be absolutely necessary in taking notice of what the right honourable gentleman had stated, especially at so late a period of the night. He said this both on account of what he felt for the House and for himself, he being engaged to attend at an early hour tomorrow upon public business of very great importance, (the Committee on the affairs of the Bank.) He felt it impossible, however, to abstain from following the right honourable gentleman in some parts of his statements upon this subject. That right honourable gentleman had concluded a very long speech with an apology for having taken up so much of the time of the House. He felt the necessity of that apology, for he had, in the course of his speech, taken notice of the Cavalry and Supplemental-Militia Acts, and he had spoken on the unreasonableness of our being alarmed at the prospect of an invasion under all our present circumstances. This part of the speech of the right honourable gentleman could not, upon a superficial view of it, appear to be very closely connected with the question that was now before the House. But he thought he could see the meaning of introducing, at this time, these seemingly unconnected ideas; although there was no seeming connection in the arguments that arose out of those topics, and the subject now to be debated, yet there was a connection between them and the sentiments of Ministers, and it made part of their system. Ministers had for a long time laboured to create an alarm in that House and in this country. They had so far succeeded in that system of alarm as to secure the confidence of a majority of Parliament, who, upon all occasions during this war, had uniformly voted against any inquiry into their conduct; they had abused that confidence so much, and had brought the country into a state so deplorable, that even their most confidential friends and adherents began to shake off the delusion under which they had acted, and began at last to speak of the necessity of inquiry. How far those gentlemen were sincere in this new tone, would be seen by their votes. But Ministers now began to be alarmed themselves, that was, for their own safety; and therefore, to restore confidence again to their adherents, they found it politic to do away the alarm which themselves had created. This was the key to the mystery of Ministers having changed their tone. The right honourable gentleman, therefore, was perfectly consistent in his conduct; it had all the use he intended; and now that he found he was likely to meet with a little more than he wished from the system of alarm, he was desirous of suppressing it, and therefore he complained of its effects. He ended his speech with an extraordinary figure of rhetoric, and very beautiful language, saying, that the idea of an invasion by the enemy, while we have a fleet so supe-

rior to theirs, was a thing not within the compass of a credible belief. That he should have been an advocate against the danger of alarm would have been a wonderful thing, if his motives were not easily comprehended. It was not, in truth, alarm that he dreaded, it was the direction which the alarm had taken that produced this change in his language. While the country was alarmed, it suited his purpose well enough, and therefore he propagated that alarm, because it produced confidence in the Executive Government; but when that alarm was such as to make his adherents think it necessary to have an inquiry into the conduct of Administration which produced that alarm, it became necessary to do it away as soon as possible, for an inquiry was what Ministers would shun at all events. That right honourable gentleman had accused his opponents with having been inconsistent in their conduct, in now making so serious an object of an invasion, when it was well known, that while Ministers called upon Parliament to make provision against it, they treated it as a mere bugbear: indeed they were disposed to treat it as a bugbear, under the idea that our fleet was to be well managed; but when they saw it was scandalously mismanaged, the idea of an invasion became a very serious thing. Such was the case upon the subject which was now before the House. It was under the idea that our fleets would be well managed that they had opposed the Cavalry and Supplementary-militia Bills; they in that view thought them useless. He even still thought the Cavalry Bill, not useless merely, but something worse than useless, because it was the cause of a vast expence without the least possible utility. But, to pursue the idea of the bugbear, of which the right honourable gentleman had said so much, he believed his honourable friends never applied that epithet to the idea of an invasion of Ireland, which was the place that had been attacked. In the place where an attack of the enemy was apprehended, and where it was made, there was neither a Cavalry nor a Supplemental-militia Bill; in the place where there was no apprehension of attack, there was a Supplemental-militia Bill and Cavalry Act. The place against which no attack was apprehended was to be defended in an extraordinary manner; the place that was likely to be attacked was left entirely defenceless; and he would say, that the enemy not having obtained a footing in Ireland, was not owing to the wisdom of His Majesty's Councils, but to the interposition of Providence.

A great part of the right honourable gentleman's speech referred to the fleet under the command of Sir John Jervis, of whose brilliant victory no man thought more highly than he did, and in praise of whom it was impossible to say too much; but he must join his

honourable friend in saying, that notwithstanding the glorious event that had taken place under the command of that illustrious Admiral, yet His Majesty's Ministers were highly to blame in leaving him with a force apparently so inferior to the enemy, with whom he had to contend. In the brilliancy of that most glorious victory, Administration had no share; and he believed, that when the opinion of that gallant Admiral was known, the public would be convinced that Administration had been negligent as to him as well as others. Here he supported his assertion by a reference to the force that Admiral had, the manner in which he had not been, but ought to have been reinforced, the station he was in, and the facility with which he might have been reinforced, &c. ; and then proceeded to take a view of the manner in which the Admiralty had neglected to equip Lord Bridport, and the fleet under his command, for the coast of Ireland, at the time when the French came into Bantry Bay. He said he expected that the Admiralty would have laid the whole of their conduct before the House upon this occasion; that those who defended the conduct of Lord Spencer would have met this inquiry in a full and fair manner; that they would have laid all the documents that related to this transaction before the House; instead of which, the right honourable gentleman produced those parts only which had been selected for the purpose of defending the Admiralty, suppressing all those documents which would have put the case in its clear light; he made a speech upon them, as if they contained all the documents which belonged to the subject, and then triumphantly called for the approbation of the House upon the conduct of the Admiralty. This was a modern mode of meeting an accusation; but he preferred the old-fashioned mode of the whole of the documents being laid upon the table, and then considering the subject from such documents. But by this practice it was impossible to know how to get at every thing that was wanted. In all this complication, he was entitled to say this, that with respect to the affair at Bantry Bay, there was blame somewhere. He observed, that when any disgrace appeared to attach to Ministers, it was uniformly contended that the winds were favourable to our enemies, and unfavourable to us. Were this defence set up but once, it might deserve some attention; but when a similar excuse was made in every attempt that failed, surely a continued series of failures argued, on the very face of it, remissness and neglect. Thus, at the beginning of the war, it had been proposed to starve France by blockading its ports; but, lo! a French squadron returns loaded with provisions from America, and not a ship was found to oppose them. Another fleet of the enemy retook

Guadaloupe and St. Lucia ; a third squadron destroyed the valuable fishery of Newfoundland ; another squadron swept the coast of Africa, and nearly annihilated the settlement of Sierra Leone ; and now a fresh squadron had menaced, unmolested, the coast of Ireland. All these instances shewed that blame attached somewhere. The right honourable gentleman had produced a document to prove that Admiral Colpoys' squadron was in no want of provision ; and he particularly specified the Powerful, which could be in no want on its return to Cork, having been provisioned for six months. He said, he had heard it reported that the fleet was in want of fuel ; and he wished to know of one honourable Admiral, whom he saw in his place, (Lord H. Seymour), whether the ships might not be so reduced for want of water, as to be obliged to return on that account, though there might be no want of provisions. The right honourable Secretary had stated, that on the 22d of December instructions had been sent to Lord Bridport to put to sea immediately ; why did he not do so when the wind was fair, on the 22d or 23d, and 24th and 25th ? It was no excuse to say, that his squadron was not ready, or that Admiral Sir Roger Curtis had not returned from his cruize. He thought the Admiralty ought to be impeached for not having a fleet ready to act on the 22d. To the neglects of Administration, Mr. Grey ascribed that the enemy's fleet remained fourteen days off the coast of Ireland unmolested ; and had they not met with bad weather, nothing would have prevented them from striking a blow, and making themselves masters of Cork in two days after landing, and thus they might have destroyed twelve months provisions and stores for the navy. There was no adequate force in that part of Ireland to oppose the enemy. The right honourable gentleman seemed to think the French expedition a fortunate event, as it had proved the loyalty of that part of Ireland ; their loyalty was, indeed, meritorious, in proportion to the few obligations which the people of Ireland were under to their Government. He condemned the restrictions of the Catholics, and insisted that nothing could add more to the discontents of Ireland, than the neglects which the people of that country, at different periods, met with from Administration.

The right honourable WILLIAM WINDHAM began with stating, that general grounds of presumption of neglect were a sufficient cause for inquiry ; the honourable gentleman was perfectly warranted in the motion he had made, and the country in wishing to receive satisfaction. Still, however, the grounds on which such an inquiry was to proceed ought to be substantiated. The honourable gentleman had acknowledged the propriety of the instructions

given to Admiral Colpoys, but he blames the conduct which the Admiral pursued, when he heard that the French fleet sailed from Brest. This would go to blame the Admiral; but the Secretary at War insisted, there was no blame at all, and he well knew that the object of the motion was not to criminate the Admiral, and therefore he little doubted but that, if the gentlemen in Opposition pursued the blame to that point, they would feel no desire to run their game any farther. Mr. Windham proceeded to vindicate the conduct of the Admiralty; and shewed how impossible it was to keep a fleet for any length of time in such a state of preparation as to be ready to sail at a moment's warning. When Government knew nothing but that the French fleet was out with sixteen sail, it would have been extreme rashness to have sent Lord Bridport out with a greatly inferior fleet, and till he had been joined at Saint Helens by the rest of his squadron. Mr. Windham, even if the enemy had landed, denied the probability of Cork falling into their hands. He then took a view of the affairs of Ireland, paid a compliment to the inhabitants of the southern parts of that island, for the loyalty which they manifested on the approach of the enemy, and observed, it was singular enough that those very men who were supposed to be the most oppressed in that kingdom, had manifested that disposition, while the inhabitants of the North, who were not said to have the same reason for complaint, had manifested a disposition to insurrection. This, he thought, went a good way towards proving that it is possible for men sometimes to make groundless complaints against those by whom they are governed. He applauded highly the conduct of the inhabitants of the South of Ireland, and they should always have his testimony of approbation for their good sense, loyalty, and courage. He did not charge gentlemen in Opposition with any evil intention when they talked of those parts of His Majesty's dominions that were liable to attack; they, of course, meant no more than to enforce the charges they were pleased to exhibit against Administration; but they should recollect, that observations of that kind partook of the nature of a two-edged sword; they might happen to convey information to the enemy what place they might most successfully attack, as well as expose the negligence of Ministers.

Mr. FOX. Sir, I shall do, what may seem to be somewhat irregular, begin with the last part of the right honourable gentleman's speech who has just sat down—with that stale and profligate argument of his, always used against those who oppose the measures of Administration; that when they charge Ministers with neglecting the defence of the country, they are to be considered as holding

out an invitation to the enemy to attempt an invasion: if that be true, Sir, we had better at once put an end to the forms as we have done to the substance of the Constitution: if that be true, we had better leave every thing to His Majesty's Ministers, and, instead of making Members take the oath against transubstantiation, let no man come into the House who will not previously declare that he will never, in any war, say any thing against the conduct of the Executive Government. The right honourable gentleman has talked of "two-edged tools;" in a state of war every complaint against Administration must be in the nature of a two-edged tool. If I complain that one part of the country is weak, I may be told, Take care; you are doing that which is dangerous; you are communicating to the enemy which is the least defensible point of the empire. To whom, then, am I to make the complaint? To whom am I to state my opinion? I wish to know whether Ministers are the only persons to be permitted to give advice? Sir, I will state what my opinion has been with respect to an invasion; and though the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) went in a manner out of his way to reproach me, I will again state, that if Ministers were really alarmed for the safety of Ireland, I cannot, upon any possible ground, account for their conduct. From that statement I do not recede; nay, I will say farther, that if they are apprehensive of any fresh danger to Ireland, their conduct is little less than insanity. I am sorry, Sir, I was in any way the means of preventing an honourable friend of mine from delivering his sentiments before me—of the state of the sister kingdom, he is better informed than I can be supposed to be; but I have dear connections, whose property is not partly in this kingdom, and partly in that, but wholly in Ireland. When I speak of Ireland, therefore, I may be imagined to speak with some degree of feeling; and if what I hear be true, that country is at this moment more discontented than she was before the attempt of an invasion. I suppose I shall now be told, that I am holding out an invitation to the French. No, Sir, I am not inviting them; I am inviting His Majesty's Ministers to take measures to remove that discontent, and to remedy the grievances complained of. But we find that Ireland is divided into two parts—the contented and discontented—upon that subject we shall hear more in future; but let not the right honourable gentleman who spoke last, state his opinion as ours. I have said, that the Catholics were in a state of unjust exclusion; but I never have said that the Protestants had no reason for complaint, or that they were not excluded from the essence and substance of the British Constitution. I do conceive the North, the South,

the West, and the Eastern part of Ireland, to be in such a situation, that if a speedy remedy is not applied, the Minister will not do justice to the British empire. But the right honourable gentleman, if there is any logic in his statement, means to say, that it is a common way with us to exclaim, Make the people happy, by taking away their grievances! If he had said that we made use of an argument that was self-evident, and had complained of us on that account, it might have been well; but he says this, "May not men have unreasonable grounds of complaint?" To this I answer, yes; but that is no reason for not removing their reasonable complaints. Does the Secretary at War then mean to contend, that to relieve Ireland, the whole country should be put in a state of oppression? The North, he says, wants nothing, and is disloyal. The South wants every thing, and is still loyal. Here I suppose the gentleman means to put this paradox, and say, that we had better place all Ireland and England in the same state in which the Catholics in the South of Ireland are, and that then we may expect universal loyalty. I should have thought, that when the right honourable Member was attempting to prove that Ireland had no cause for complaint, he would have explained why proclamations were issuing daily for declaring parts of the kingdom out of the King's peace. For my own part, I firmly believe that the grievances of which Ireland complains, are real, deep, well-founded. But whether they are so or not, we hear that the people in the South are loyal; yet all the reward they get for their loyalty, is not a redress of grievances, not a removal of disabilities, not a cessation of exclusions — No, Sir; the reward they get is empty praise, a barren testimony to their loyalty: but they have no more to expect than those in the North, who are represented to be of a very different description. I certainly do admire the loyalty that was shewn by the people of Ireland upon the late invasion; and I should have thought that, by liberal and enlightened minds, that loyalty would have been deemed an unanswerable reason for giving the people, without delay, those privileges to which they are entitled by justice. No such project, however, has been yet adopted, and that country remains in the same state in which it was at the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. He left them, after having had the authority of Government for their tantalizing expectations, and the cup of happiness was on a sudden dashed from their lips. What may be the opinion of the right honourable gentleman I know not; but this I do know, that if there was no reason in the time of Lord Fitzwilliam for removing the grievances complained of, the loyalty that has since been shewn is, at least, hardly requited, if it is to be

brought only as an argument to shew that the people are not discontented. And upon the subject of grievances, what do the gentlemen of Ireland state? There are in that country men of as great respectability, and of as high abilities as any in this. Will the right honourable gentleman say, that those who supported Lord Fitzwilliam are inclined to those Jacobinical principles of which we have so often been accused? Will he, because they did for a time give into the alarm that was raised to support the war, will he call them Jacobins? Look to these men! Look to the name of Grattan? of whom I never shall speak but with respect, and who, I am sure, will never err on the side on which we are said to err; look at these men, and then let the right honourable gentleman say, whether Ireland has no grievances. There is another point which that gentleman might have gone into, and I watched him narrowly, to see whether he would—it is this—he has denied, that if the enemy had landed at Bantry Bay, there was a probability of Cork falling into their hands? Has he denied this? Let us institute an inquiry into the fact; he will not deny it. Will he say in excuse that it is impossible to guard every part of the empire? Shall we then forget, that on the 26th of October last, we were told of an invasion; and when we come to discuss the subject in March, we find that no part of the empire has been protected. And here I cannot help remarking upon what the right honourable gentleman, in hopes of undoing the alarm excited before Christmas, says to us: What, he asks, can you say, who always treated the idea of an invasion as a bugbear? Sir, I never did so treat the idea when applied to Ireland; but there is, in the argument of the Secretary at War, a whimsical inconsistency; he is saying, How can we be invaded with a superior fleet, and this at a time when the subject of inquiry is, how the enemy came to invade us? For one, I think, while we have a fleet which is not, as it has been in the late expedition of the French, mismanaged, that an invasion, with respect to Great Britain, is not an evil of the first magnitude. This, I dare say now, under the wing of the right honourable gentleman, though it will be remembered by the House, that when I said so before, I was rebuked as if I was a person not properly feeling for my country. I conceive, however, that an invasion would be an evil comparatively small, as long as we have a superior fleet. This leads me more particularly to the present argument. The right honourable gentleman says, that though there are many charges against an invasion while we have such a fleet, yet if there be only chance in favour of it, it is right to be upon our guard. Agreed. But there is no way in which we could have been so much harassed

as by the mode that has been adopted. Let gentlemen apply the argument to the naval force, and see how far it will go. A fleet was kept off Brest, and it was probable that the French fleet might not escape; but ought we not to have had a second fleet at home to have intercepted the enemy in case they had made their escape? This is the important part of the discussion. I am not expressing any dissatisfaction at the conduct of Admiral Colpoys' fleet; I am only contending, that we ought to have had a second fleet at Portsmouth ready to sail as soon as possible. I have no such apprehensions; but says he, can a fleet be ready to sail at an hour's notice? There is this difference between a land and naval expedition: When I create any delay in a land expedition, I know the exact amount of the delay, and that it cannot extend beyond a given period. Upon shore I can calculate; but by sea, where I am subject to sudden changes of wind, it is material for me not to lose a minute; for if I do, I may likely produce a delay of two months.

Mr. Fox concluded with taking notice of all the facts of that case, and maintained most strenuously that it was the duty of that House not to take the words of one set of Ministers in defence of another. He warned them of the probable effect of such a mode of defence. It might be injurious to the reputation of Lord Spencer, as it had been to that of his predecessor, Lord Chatham; for the former had a majority of the House of Commons in his favour, when an inquiry was moved for to examine into his conduct, and yet shortly afterwards he was compelled to give up his office of First Lord of the Admiralty.

Mr. STURT complained of the repeated insults offered to our coasts, which ought to justify an inquiry. He asserted, that Admiral Colpoys' ship came into port short of provisions, particularly fuel, which was as bad as any want; for he did not think the right honourable gentleman would like raw beef any more than the sailors. He was astonished at nothing which that gentleman (Mr. Dundas) asserted, he had so much boldness, confidence, and assurance. His whole account of the security of Ireland was a misstatement, and he read a letter he had received from a friend to prove it. He hoped, in God's name, he would not much longer have the direction of affairs. He might twist and toss his head about; but he hoped it would soon be twisted somewhere else.

Mr. Chancellor PITT considered the question to lay within a very narrow compass, and it was easy to decide on it. A very clear and detailed statement had been given by his right honourable friend, which he had no doubt had made a very forcible impression on the House; he had also proposed to have a list of papers printed in sup-

port of that statement. If inquiry was the duty of Parliament, it was true on the other hand, that details should be dispensed with that are useless, and which may be mischievous. The gentlemen on the other side had been pleased to call these documents garbled and defective extracts, though they did not know their contents. All he wished for was, that they would compare these vouchers on the table with the arguments of his friend, and then decide. With respect to the general question, it was this, whether or not sufficient preparations were made by the Admiralty to be ready against any possible expedition which might be fitted out in the ports of France? It is admitted, that either Portugal or Ireland was the point of attack; the one was our faithful ally, the other was as dear to us as Great Britain itself. What was the nature of our preparation? why we had one fleet actually watching the enemy on their coasts, and ready to follow them wherever they might go, in case the weather had permitted that we could have known their direction; and we had another fleet in such a forward state of preparation, as to have been ready to have sailed in five days after we knew that the Brest fleet had sailed, had the wind been fair. Had either one fleet or the other been so fortunate as to have met the enemy, what prodigies of valour might we not have expected? In respect to the navy of Great Britain, it ought to be recollected how many and various objects, and what rich and important possessions it had to protect. This circumstance must lessen our superiority in some points, especially when the enemy had so lately been reinforced by the fleets of Spain. What more could be done than to have one fleet on the French coasts, and another ready for sea? Having no positive information of the destination of the enemy's fleet, occasioned by the mere circumstance of fogs and tempestuous weather, is it extraordinary that we should have been so long in the dark, and unable to find out their place of rendezvous, when the French Admiral and General Hoche, who were in possession of the secret, and sailed in the same expedition, as well as other Captains of the fleet, had, from the same causes of weather, never been able even to join it. Admiral Colpoys' fleet was in a state and condition to follow the enemy, and the papers offered to be produced would prove it. All the letters from Admiral Colpoys were proposed to be given; and in the one written after he first heard that the French fleet had sailed, but before he knew its destination, he said, he should follow them the moment he knew the direction they had steered. Another circumstance which determined him to remain on his station was, his having shortly after chased some ships into Brest, which he conceived to be part of their scattered fleet, and that others would

follow ; whereas, those ships turned out to be part of the Toulon squadron. The weather was so hazy, it was hardly possible to distinguish them, or get a clear observation of their force. Thus far, therefore, there could be no complaint either against the Admiralty, or Admiral Colpoys. As to Lord Bridport, his fleet was on the 20th of December in such a state of forwardness as to be ready for sea in five days. He had then eight sail of the line, which dropped down to St. Helens ; but not knowing the destination of the Brest fleet, it was impossible to conceive that the case was so urgent ; nor would he have been warranted in sailing only with eight ships, when six more were just ready, and the French had seventeen sail. When these ships were ready, the wind was foul. On the subject of alarms which had been abroad, and the accusation brought against him as having been the first to spread them, and the first to lament the direction they had taken, he should shortly observe, that he had wished to put gentlemen on their guard against any attempts which the enemy might make, and accordingly he had recommended great exertions in the country. There was much at stake, and accordingly it was necessary to be prepared by land and sea. He never had a doubt of the spirit of the country, or that having taken the necessary precautions, we were not fully able to defend ourselves. His has been the language of precaution, and not of alarm. Mr. Chancellor Pitt concluded his speech by complaining of Mr. Fox's violent and inflammatory language respecting the state of Ireland, and especially of the Catholics, who had had more indulgences granted them within the few last years, than they ever had before. So far was the allegation from being true, that they had been oppressed by the present Government.

Mr. WHITBREAD, in his reply, made some animadversions on the arrival of Admiral Elphinstone, in Ireland, while the French squadron was in Bantry Bay, which, as he afforded no assistance against them, in his opinion, demanded explanation.

Lord KEITH, (late Admiral Exphinstone), said, that he had always discharged his duty to the best of his abilities, and for the service of his country. If he conducted himself ill, as an officer, he was amenable to a Court Martial, if he had offended as a Member of Parliament, he was within the judgement of the House ; and he professed himself ready, on any proper occasion, to answer any inquiry that might be demanded of him.

Mr. WHITBREAD disclaimed any intention of throwing out the smallest insinuation against the character and services of the gallant Admiral, for whose good conduct, personal valour, and professional merits, he entertained the highest veneration and esteem. The

public had lately an occasion to exult in a considerable naval acquisition, the fruit of his discreet management and skilful precautions. The circumstance he had slightly mentioned incidentally occurred among other facts which he thought it his duty to bring forward; but he was very far from meaning to convey any personal animadversion against the gallant Admiral, who, he was perfectly persuaded, was clear from all blame in the transaction to which he had alluded.

The House then divided on the previous question, when there appeared: For it, 201; Against it, 62.

List of the Minority, on Mr. Whitbread's motion, "for an inquiry into the conduct of Ministers with regard to the late attempt of the French to invade Ireland."

Anson, Thomas
Aubrey, Sir J.
Barclay, G.
Bastard, J. P.
Beauclerk, C. G.
Biddulph, R.
Bouverie, Hon. E.
Brogden, J.
Burch, J. R.
Burdett, Sir F.
Byng, G.
Clayton, Sir R.
Coke, T. W.
Combe, H. C.
Copley, Sir L.
Courtenay, J.
Crewe, J.
Damer, L.
Denison, W. J.
Fletcher, Sir H.
Fox, Right Hon. C. J.
Galway, Viscount
Greene, J.
Grey, Charles
Hare, J.
Harrison, J.
Howard, H.
Jervoise, C. J.
Langston, J.
Lawrance, F.
Lemon, Sir W.

Lloyd, J. M.
Morpeth, Lord
Milner, Sir W.
Milton, Lord
Nicholls, J.
North, D.
Northey, W.
Pierse, H.
Phillips, J. G.
Porter, G.
Rawdon, Hon. J.
Richardson, J.
Ridley, Sir M.
Russell, Lord J.
Russell, Lord W.
St. John, Hon. St. A.
Sheridan, R. B.
Shum, G. C.
Sitwell, S.
Smith, W.
Spencer, Lord R.
Stanley, Lord
Sturt, C.
Tierney, G.
Townshend, Lord J.
Tufton, Hon. H.
Vane, Sir F.
Walwyn, J.
Winnington, Sir R.
Wycombe, Earl of

TELLERS,

Tarleton, General

Whitbread, Samuel

Monday, 6th March.

The **SPEAKER** informed the House that a mistake arose in carrying up a bill to suspend the operation of two acts of the 15th and 17th of His present Majesty, respecting the issuing promissory notes for the payment of small sums of money for a limited time; by accident a clause which had been added to the bill had been left in the office. He stated this to be a case without a precedent, and submitted to the House whether the better mode would not be to send a message, together with the clause, to the Bar of the House of Lords, and acquaint their Lordships of the mistake; which the House agreed to, and the mode was adopted accordingly.

A message from the Lords informed the House that their Lordships had passed a bill for relieving William Marquis of Lansdowne from certain penalties and disabilities to which he had subjected himself, by having inadvertently spoken and voted in the House of Peers without having taking the oaths, &c. required by law.

The bill having been read a first time,

The **SPEAKER** observed, that the standing order of the House required that there should be an interval of three days between the first and the second reading of a private bill, and this came under that description; but the House had the power, and perhaps under the special circumstances of this case would be disposed to dispense with that order—which was done accordingly, and the bill was read a second time.

The Speaker then observed, that by the standing order it was required that an interval of eight days should elapse between the second reading and the commitment of the bill: perhaps the House would, for the same reason, dispense with that order also. Which they did, and ordered the bill to be committed to a Select Committee immediately.

The Committee on the election for Maidstone was postponed to the 27th of April on the motion of Mr. W. Dundas; and that of the Kent election to the 2d of May, on the motion of Mr. Williams.

Mr. **MAINWARING** said, that, in pursuance of the notice he had given, it now became his duty to state to the House some facts which he believed would call for a regulation in the management of the sale of live cattle, which was considered by those who were well acquainted with the subject as the principle cause of the high price of provisions. It would not be necessary for him to consume much of the time of the House; little need be said by him to induce gentlemen to enter upon the investigation of this matter,

for it materially concerned every individual in this country, especially the lower orders, of whom the House of Commons were the united Representatives. Late in the last Session of the last Parliament, a petition was presented to that House by a body of men calling themselves "Cutting Butchers," complaining of great hardships which they endured in consequence of the practice of engrossing, forestalling, and regrating live cattle, which, they said, were the principal causes of the high price of provisions. The House referred that subject to a Committee. That Committee sat for some time to examine into the allegations of the petition, and a number of witnesses were examined, after which the Committee made a Report, and stated the substance of the evidence which was given to them, together with some observations thereon. On account of the lateness of the Session, no farther proceedings were had upon this subject. It would tire the House if he were to detail the whole matter of the Report of that Committee, and therefore he should not do it: but it was material that he should state a few of the facts contained in that Report, which was ordered to be printed, and was now on the journals of the House, so that every Member might of course be acquainted with its contents. It appeared by that Report, that there are a class of persons who are called jobbers, who make it a business to go about the country to the farmers, and to buy up immense quantities of large cattle, which are generally ready for the supply of the metropolis. When the jobber has got the cattle out of the hands of the grazier, they are jobbed again, and are sold from one to the other of these jobbers three or four times over before they fairly come to the London market, and thus these jobbers at last send them to the London market, with a fixed price upon them, contrary to the interest of the grazier, as well as the consumer; for the grazier sells them at the price which they will fetch of the jobber; but the jobbers by this practice get all the live cattle into their hands, and they afterwards fix the price of the market upon these cattle; the consequence of which is, the jobbers have the whole controul of the market in their own hands. By these practices most enormous sums of money are made by these jobbers, insomuch that one of the witnesses examined before the Committee stated that one of these jobbers cleared the sum of 2000*l.* in the year 1795, for his share of jobbing in oxen. Enormous sums of money are made by the same practices by the jobbing in sheep; large profits are got in this way sometimes in the course of an hour. All that he had hitherto stated referred only to cattle fit for the London market; but this was not all, for these jobbers buy up the lean cattle all over the country, take them to graziers to be fed, and

afterwards set their own price upon them, till they get at last the whole of the cattle of the country out of the hands of the farmers ; and in the instances of the lean cattle, the jobbers get a double profit, for the cattle pass twice through their hands.

Another subject of grievous complaint was, that of regrating in the Smithfield market. A number of persons go to this market early, and buy up the cattle there, and merely lead them across the market, and then sell them singly to the butchers, by which in the course of half an hour they make most enormous profit, and thereby enhance the price most prodigiously.

Another grievous subject of complaint was that of forestalling, which was as great an evil as either of the other two ; this was the practice of what is called the carcass butcher. He goes ten or twenty miles into the country to meet the great dealers in cattle as they are coming to London, and sometimes buys up one half of the cattle that are intended for market ; but they never come to market alive ; they are sent to the private slaughter-houses of these carcass butchers ; by this the Smithfield market often appears thin of live cattle, by which means again there is an apparent, though no real scarcity : the consequence of which is, a very high price of butchers meat.

These were inconveniencies which required remedies. It was clear from this Report to which he had referred, and from the evidence of all the witnesses who were examined before the Committee, said, that the metropolis might be well supplied but for the practices to which he had alluded ; and that when the market appeared thin of cattle, that thinness has been owing to the artifices of these men ; and the scarcity was not real. He believed, indeed, that sometimes cattle were sent to market much younger than they ought to be for sale there ; but this he believed to be chiefly owing to the poverty of those who sent them : that, however, was not the question now to be considered. The question now was, Whether there were any practices that necessarily enhance the price of provisions ? And whether these practices were improper ? If the House thought there were such practices, they ought to devise some means to stop them. There were many other matters in the Report, but he thought he had stated enough to entitle him to call upon the House to try to adopt some remedy. Some legislative interference ought, in his opinion, to take place. He was aware he might be told that he had stated only that there were engrossing, forestalling and regrating, and that there are laws in existence against such practices. He allowed that to be, in a great measure, true ; but then the mode of carrying such laws into execution was attended with so much diffi-

eulty, so much delay and perplexity, so much loss of time and expence, and so many discouraging circumstances altogether, that no individual could be expected to stand sufficiently firm and forward for the public, to enforce these laws so as to bring their enactments into general utility. The time and trouble, the expences of witnesses going before a Grand Jury to find a bill, and afterwards to attend a trial, and the various other inconveniences which attended a prosecution of this nature, were such as to deter an individual from entering upon a measure of this kind in a way sufficiently general to be of public use. Of the magnitude of the evil the House had the opinion of a Committee, whose Report was now before them; and therefore it would be for the House to consider whether some measure or other should not be now adopted. He knew very well that the House would be cautious in coming to any measure that might seem to lay any restrictions upon trade, and that it might be said, that in a commercial country like this, nothing should be adopted by the Legislature that should in any degree cramp the operations of trade; that all speculations in trade should be left to find their own level. He subscribed to that doctrine in a general way, for he thought it a good general doctrine; but when men by artifices contrived to enhance the price of common food, he did conceive it to be the duty of that House to adopt measures by which the price of such articles should be kept as low as possible; for if a man, doomed to subsist by honest industry and labour, could not support himself, the conclusion was obvious, he must either become a burden upon the public, or he must starve; and while we wished to support our trade, we must not forget that these very labourers are the pillars on which the whole of our prosperity rests; that their labour is the foundation of our trade and commerce. It is therefore the interest, as well as the duty, of Parliament, to provide for labourers as well as they could. The Committee had given their opinion upon the complaints which he had briefly stated; they stated it as their opinion, that these practices were the cause of the dearness of provisions; some of the practices ought to be much better regulated than they are at present, by instituting a power to have summary conviction of those who are guilty, and some of the practices ought to be altogether abolished. Such was the opinion of the Committee. He felt some difficulty as to the mode which he ought to pursue. He should be glad to move for leave to bring in a bill for the better preventing of engrossing, forestalling, and regrating; but if that was not regular, he must move for another Committee to inquire into the causes of the high price of provisions, and that they should report their opinion thereupon to the House.

The **SPEAKER** said, that the House might take the benefit of the information in the Report, which had been already made, if they pleased, although it was that of a former Parliament ; but it would be necessary that the Report should be read.

The Report was read.

Mr. **MAINWARING** then moved, “ For leave to bring in a bill for the more effectually preventing forestalling, engrossing, and regrating live cattle.”

Mr. Alderman **COMBE** seconded the motion. He conceived that some farther regulations were necessary ; and as far as he could judge, those regulations would not diminish or check any of the fair advantages of Commerce.

Mr. Serjeant **ADAIR** moved, that the order of the day, for going into a Committee on the bill for relief to Quakers, be read.

Mr. **PIERREPONT** said, that although it might seem presumptuous to resist the bill after the full discussion it had received, he could not in duty decline it ; he had given it his entire attention, and the result was, a conviction that it would be attended with most pernicious consequences. It therefore appeared to him, that the more candid, open, and ingenuous way would be to oppose the bill in its present stage. He therefore opposed the Speaker leaving the Chair.

Mr. **ADAIR** rose. He had not expected the opposition to the bill which had been shewn by the last honourable gentleman ; he had thought that at any rate it would have been suffered to pass through the stage it then was in, before any serious opposition was offered to it. [Here Mr. Adair went over his old ground of support to the bill at considerable length.]

The **SOLICITOR GENERAL** said, that the bill proposed to take money out of the pockets of one class of people, to satisfy the consciences of another class. It sought to pick the pockets of the clergy, without leaving them a competent remedy.

Mr. **HOBHOUSE** was aware that the Quakers were themselves a little divided with respect to the payment of tythes. A portion of them held it right to make their scruples the ground of determined opposition to the payment of tythes, while some were less tenacious. With respect to the arguments of the Solicitor General, Mr. Hobhouse thought the Clergy had as much reason to petition for the repeal of the act of William, as to oppose the present bill. Mr. Hobhouse supported the motion.

Mr. **JEFFREYS** defended the character of the body of people called Quakers from an attack which he conceived had been made upon them by the Solicitor General.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL declared, that he had no intention of saying any thing against that body of people ; on the contrary, he thought them in general very respectable men.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL said, that he at first entertained sentiments in favour of the bill, but that, upon more mature investigation, he was inclined to give it his negative.

A Member moved, that the commitment of the bill be deferred for this day six months.

The House divided : For putting off the Bill, 28 ; Against it, 12. Majority against the bill, 16.

Tuesday, 7th March.

Mr. BRAMSTON brought up the following Report :

“ The Committee appointed to examine and state the total amount of outstanding demands on the Bank of England, and likewise of the Funds for discharging the same ; and to report the result thereof to the House, together with their opinion on the necessity of providing for the confirmation and continuance, for a time to be limited, of measures taken in pursuance of the Minute of Council on the 26th of February last ; and who were empowered to report their proceedings from time to time to the House ; have farther examined into the several matters referred to their consideration ; and have agreed to report to the House ;

“ That, in their opinion, it is necessary to provide for the confirmation and continuance, for a time to be limited, of the measures taken in pursuance of the Order of Council on the 26th of February last ; submitting to the wisdom of Parliament to determine for what limited time it may be necessary that those measures should be continued.”

The Report was ordered to be laid on the table.

The bill to provide for paying and cloathing the militia was read, and ordered to be read a second time on Thursday next.

Mr. W. DUNDAS stated, that the description of the parishes in the bill for raising a number of men for the army and navy in Scotland was defective ; and therefore he moved for leave to bring in a bill to amend that act of Parliament.

The act being read, leave was given to bring in a bill to amend it.

Colonel WOOD gave notice, that if there should not be other pressing business before the House on the 14th. of this month, he should submit a motion for an inquiry to be instituted on the state of the defence of this country.

Mr. Chancellor PITT, who had just entered the House, said, he understood that the farther Report of the Committee on the affairs of the Bank had been just laid before the House. He was sorry he was absent when the Report was brought up, but his absence was unavoidable. He should not now enter at large upon the subject of that Report, for that would be unseasonable, especially in so thin a House; he thought it necessary, however, to observe, that both the last and the former Report of the Committee upon this subject ought to be taken into the consideration of the House with as little delay as possible; he therefore should wish to move, that both Reports should be taken into consideration on Thursday next. He did not mean to press that they should at all events be discussed on that day, unless the honourable gentleman, who was in possession of that day by a previous notice, should be willing to wave his right, or not oppose the matter coming on that day, which he hoped he would not oppose; and that he would give way to this urgent business. If, however, that should not be the case, he should propose that the Reports be taken into consideration on Friday; but that, at all events, he could not delay the discussion farther than Monday. He thought that the better way would be now to make the order for this discussion for Thursday; not that he should insist on its coming on that day, but that it should rather operate as a notice to stand for that day, unless he should hear in the interval that there are objections to its coming on that day; and when these Reports are taken into consideration, it would be necessary to take the sense of the House on what is the most proper mode of inquiry into the causes of this event; an inquiry of that nature was one in which he understood all parts of the House concurred in thinking necessary, and in which opinion he for one certainly joined: the mode of doing this would be matter of discussion; but he thought it highly important that that House should ascertain fully the real situation of this country in point of finance. He should move for a Committee to inquire into the state of the finance of this country, and to distinguish the increase of our debt since the commencement of the present war; the provision that had been made for that debt; to make a statement of the probable expences of the present year upon the supposition that the war should continue; and to make a general comparison between such probable expences, upon such a supposition, and the ways and means already provided for defraying them. He should now move, "That the two Reports of the Committee on the affairs of the Bank, &c. be taken into consideration on Thursday next." Ordered.

Mr. W. SMITH said, he could not answer whether his honour-

able friend would consent to postpone his motion on Thursday ; but he supposed he would have no objection.

Mr. Chancellor PITT then moved, "That the second Report of the Committee on the affairs of the Bank be printed." Ordered.

An account of the amount of money advanced by the Bank of England, for the public service, to the 25th of February, was ordered to be laid before the House.

The Speaker, attended by several Members, went up to the House of Peers to hear His Majesty's assent given by commission to the act for enabling the East-India Company to increase their capital, to the Marquis of Lansdowne's Indemnity Bill, and to some private bills.

Adjourned to Thursday, Wednesday, the 8th of March, being appointed to be publicly observed as a Fast day.

Thursday, 9th March.

Mr. CANNING brought up a copy of the Treaty between His Britannic Majesty and the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, which was ordered to be printed.

A copy of the Preliminaries of this Treaty was laid upon the table some time ago ; this was a copy of the Treaty, with the ratifications.

Mr. GREY reminded the honourable gentleman of an account of the sums of money which had been advanced in consequence of this Treaty, which was ordered to be made out some time ago, but which was not yet before the House.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Colchester election reported the decision of that Committee, declaring the sitting Member to be duly elected ; the petition against said election to be frivolous and vexatious, and the opposition to said petition to be neither frivolous nor vexatious.

Mr. TIERNEY presented a petition from the parish of Saint George's, Southwark, against the Poor Bill, which was ordered to lie upon the table till the said bill was committed.

Mr. Tierney moved for an account of all the outstanding advances made from the Directors of the Bank to Government, with the interest of the same, since the Order of Council was issued on the 25th of February last for the restriction of payment in specie. Ordered.

He then moved for an account of the increase or decrease of bills discounted by the Bank, in the week ending Saturday the 4th

of March, 1797, in comparison with the bills discounted in the week ending the 25th of February, 1797, being that before the Order of Council was issued.

Mr. Chancellor PITT objected to the motion, because it would tend to divulge the private transactions of the Bank, and thereby prove injurious to public credit. The House had hitherto thought proper to trust their inquiry to a Secret Committee, which in its first report did not enter into any account of the discounts of the Bank; and therefore, whatever might be the motives of the House and its Secret Committee to use such a discretion, as he did not doubt that discretion was properly exercised with a true regard to the public interests, he trusted the same motives would decide the House not to agree to the motion. Besides, this was not the time to enter into any previous discussion about the management of the Bank, when the subject proposed for the consideration of the House rising out of the two Reports of the Committee of Secrecy, would eventually determine what might be the most proper measures hereafter to be taken.

Mr. TIERNEY said, that the right honourable gentleman certainly had not distinctly heard his motion, else he would not have opposed it on the grounds he adopted. He was induced to move for the account from no motive of impertinent curiosity, but merely to know the comparative amount of the discounts made by the Bank on the two weeks which had been specified. It was generally believed that they had increased to a most enormous amount, and that uncommon accommodation was granted to every person who was disposed to be in the least clamorous. It was important for the House to know, whether this belief was true or false; and the information might be granted in perfect consistency with the Report of the Committee. He was very much surprized, indeed, that the right honourable gentleman had objected to its being given; since, if the Bank really possessed solidity of resource, and, if the conduct of the Directors was guided by that prudence for which they got credit, the greater publicity that was given either to the state or the management of their affairs the better.

Mr. SHERIDAN wondered why the right honourable gentleman did not object to the other motion which his honourable friend had made, respecting the advances to Government since the 25th of February, upon the same plea—for there was no more real cause of objection against the one than the other. His honourable friend had only moved for such particulars as could not be made up when the Committee of Inquiry was appointed, in which there was nothing secret; but by affecting mystery where there was

no reason, the Bank might actually be brought into discredit. He certainly thought there was something very extraordinary in the conduct of the Bank Directors, if the reports were true, in continuing their discounts when they were no longer able to pay their notes; and if they had increased their outstanding engagements from thirteen to fifteen, sixteen, or seventeen millions, it could not be an immaterial circumstance to know how far their assets had increased to discharge them.

Mr. Chancellor PITT supposed, if the Committee of Secrecy had known or thought it prudent to declare what was the amount of discounts granted by the Bank; it would have been stated in the Report. The general subject had been referred to the Secret Committee, which reported upon the whole; and when the House thought proper to refer the whole to a Secret Committee, instead of entering itself into an investigation of the component parts, and the Secret Committee thought proper to report upon the whole instead of dissecting particulars, he could not think it prudent or fit to act in contradiction to them.

Mr. FOX disclaimed any intention of entering into an inquiry into the component parts of the property of the Bank, such an inquiry being altogether inapplicable to the present motion. The object of his honourable friend was not to ascertain how much of the property of the Bank consisted in discounts, but in what proportion these discounts had increased since the 24th of February last. It was possible, that since the Order of Council of that date was issued, the affairs of the Bank might be so materially altered by their proportion of discounts as to affect the necessity of the continuance of the Order; for if their discounts had increased, of course the necessity for continuing the operations of the Order was become stronger; whereas, if they had decreased, the necessity was certainly not so great, and consequently it ought to be limited to a shorter time. He supported the motion, therefore, on the ground, that the account was necessary to enable the House to take the proper steps, either for continuing or removing the prohibition laid upon the Bank, and under which they at present acted.

Lord HAWKESBURY was of opinion that the account might contain information which it was not proper to lay before the public. Besides, it was rendered unnecessary by the Report of the Secret Committee, as it was there stated that, from the information they had of the amount of the discounts of the Bank, of which they had seen no regular accounts, they concluded, that they made little difference in the general state of its affairs.

Sir BENJAMIN HAMMET, vindicated the wise and pru-

dent conduct of the Directors of the Bank, and particularly the propriety of granting accommodation by discounts to the merchants and private bankers, without which trade would come to a stand.

Mr. TIERNEY again repeated, that gentlemen on the other side appeared to misunderstand the nature of his motion. There was nothing secret in it. All he wanted to know was, how much more or less the Bank had discounted in the week ending on Saturday the 4th of March, than in the week prior to the Order of Council?

The motion was then put, and negatived.

Mr. TIERNEY next observed, that as Exchequer bills at present incurred a heavy discount, notwithstanding the measures lately proposed by the right honourable gentleman, and adopted by the House, for relieving the market of that burden, he should move “for an account of the amount of Exchequer Bills issued under an act of Parliament for raising a sum of 18,000,000*l.* by way of annuity, in the months of January, February, and March, with their discount in each month, and the average discount of the whole.” Ordered.

Mr. SHERIDAN begged leave to offer a few observations upon the Reports of the Committee of Secrecy, as they were materially connected with the business of the day, and afterwards suggest such a proposition as the nature of the circumstances seemed to require. The first measure which he thought necessary to adopt was, to endeavour to prevent the impression which the Report of the Committee of Secrecy might have upon the public opinion respecting the situation of the Bank, because, according to the Report of the Committee, the Government was represented as a debtor to the Bank in various sums, independent of eleven millions, which the Committee reckoned as forming so much of the capital stock of the Bank, when, in fact, that sum of eleven millions was no debt at all; and a declaration of such a nature was entirely calculated to mislead. Instead of being included in the capital stock of the Bank as a debt, it should have been reckoned, what it really is, as an annuity of 350,000*l.* per annum, that being the stipulated interest for the sum during a certain term of years. If the eleven millions were actually belonging to the effects of the Bank, and available at any time, and for any purpose, that sum might be made applicable in any exigency to discharge any demand which might occur; but that could not be called a debt where there were no means of claiming the sum so reckoned. Government might pay off that sum if it were so inclined, it is true; but it was improbable that it would do so; nor

was it at present very probable that Government would pay it off in 1814, that being the expiration of the eighteen years for which it was obtained, when it could retain the use of it for so small an interest as three per cent. There was no power in the Bank to compel the payment of this money at any period, and the payment of it rested solely on the option of Government. The Bank, as a corporation, was merely a vehicle for managing the national debt; and so long as the national debt existed, the Bank would exist also: it would be a corporation to the end of time. He wished, indeed, it might not be so: but he repeated it would be a corporation to the end of time, if the national debt remained unpaid. So far, then, it was evident, that the eleven millions did not form a part of the capital stock of the Bank, but only gave it an annuity; and this was an instance, he would not say of the inaccuracy or deliberate intention to misrepresent of the Committee, but of a statement, in consequence of which a sort of impression had gone abroad, as if that money were immediately applicable to any object of national relief. The inquiry then would be, of what effects the seventeen millions are composed which are to defray the outstanding engagements of the Bank; they consist, of course, of cash in hand, of other disposable securities, and of bills which the Bank has discounted. If part of the assets, then, consist in bills which have been discounted, the motion of his honourable friend (Mr. Tierney) was proper, in desiring to know the increase or decrease of those discounts? for if the Bank were to continue to issue fresh discounts, whatever might be the incredible distress of individuals, according to the honourable Baronet (Sir Benjamin Hammet) after it had refused to pay its own notes, although he did not wish to give his opinion of the propriety of extending its discounts, he was obliged say, that the distress of individuals was the only excuse for such a measure. He now came to examine the situation of the Bank in respect to Government. It appeared by the paper on the table, that Government owed 9,964,000*l.* to the Bank, which remained as part of their assets, and the permanent securities towards defraying the 13,770,000*l.* of outstanding demands upon it. Now what had been the conduct of Government in this affair, but the most extraordinary that ever occurred? By parity of reasoning, let any gentleman take a supposable case of individuals acting in the same way, and see how it would stand. If a merchant, for instance, had assets in bonds, merchandize, discounts, and other disposable commodities, to the value of 17,000*l.* out of which he owed to various creditors 13,000*l.*, but had on the per contra side of his account 10,000*l.* due to him by one man, which was within 3,000*l.* of the extent

of his engagements, would not that merchant think it very extraordinary conduct in that man, if he say, "Sir, I understand that your affairs are in a ticklish way; let me make an inquiry, and examine them; and if upon a strict examination, I discover that you have wherewithal in due time to extricate yourself from your difficulties, and discharge your debts, I will not say that I may not guarantee them for you." Yet, however absurd and extraordinary such a mode of proceeding might appear, such had actually been the mode of proceeding between the Government and the Bank. To go back to the comparison—the gentleman would say, "Why do you not pay me the money you owe me before you make such a request, and then I may be able to satisfy every demand without your interference." Such should have been the conduct of the Directors of the Bank upon the present occasion. He would not say that the Government had not been highly criminal; and that the Directors of the Bank had not committed great errors. He might be blamed at such a crisis for speaking so plainly; but plain dealing was now the only method to recover public credit. The next inquiry was, whether the Bank had declined all at once, or suffered a gradual decrease; and if the latter were the case, how happened it that the fatal effects which ensued were not foreseen, nor measures taken to prevent them? About four years ago the Bank increased their dividend to seven per cent. which indicated a growing prosperity; and granting that to be the case, could they have declined all at once? Was the House and the Public to imagine, when the Bank undertook to subscribe one million last year towards the Loyalty Loan of eighteen millions, that they were then suffering a gradual decrease? because if they were, how happened it that Government did not take one measure to pay the debt, or any part of it, which it owed to the Bank, to prevent the inconveniences which it has lately been subjected to, but on the contrary, took an additional sum of one million? It appeared as if it had almost been the desire and plan of Government to reduce the Bank to such a situation; and nothing short of infatuation on the part of the Bank could have submitted to such conduct. If the present difficulties were foreseen, why did the Government shut the door when the books for the subscription of the Loyalty Loan of eighteen millions were open, and when people from every part of the kingdom came forward with their money, and were disappointed? Why, instead of closing the account of eighteen millions, did they not extend it to thirty millions, when they found they could raise the money with so little trouble and inconvenience? Did they fear, that by keeping the books open for the receipt of a larger sum than they had origi-

nally stated, they should depress the Funds? Allowing that the Minister did think so, ought he not to have deliberated a little, and have taken some millions more to pay the Bank, with a temporary depression of the Funds, which would soon have rebounded to their usual standard, than have subjected mercantile men to so much distress and difficulty, by the narrowing of discounts, reduced the Bank to such a deplorable situation, depressed the Funds lower than he would have done at that time, and given so severe a shock to public credit? If the Minister did not know of the gradual decrease of the prosperity of the Bank, and did not foresee these consequences, he stands excused; but then there will be much blame and error of judgement imputable to the Bank. What then, it might be said, ought not the Directors of the Bank to lend assistance to Government, or to individuals, in cases of temporary difficulty, and on permanent securities? Undoubtedly if they could do so, they ought; but let them first recollect that they are not the Trustees of the Public, nor of Government Funds, but the Trustees of Bank Proprietors, of Widows, and of Orphans; who, if they were blindly to go on in lending unlimited assistance, must eventually be ruined. Here, then, it might be asked, What measures did Government pursue, to enable the Bank to pay its outstanding engagements? It would naturally be supposed that something was done, besides the prohibition of paying in specie. It does not appear, however, that any thing was done to avoid the measures which Government adopted. Had the Bank not the means to shun the calamity? Certainly they had, for their sufficiency has been declared. Did the Bank call in any of the debts which were due to them? Did it narrow its discounts? or did it dispose of any of its disposeable effects? One of these, if not all, would have been the plan of a merchant to retrieve himself in a similar situation; and yet not one of these measures did the Bank adopt. Why did they not sell the Loyalty Loan? If they had sold it, they might have sold it with a loss to themselves, 'tis true; but do not most men in embarrassed situations, if they dispose of their disposeable effects with loss to satisfy their creditors, suffer the loss themselves? The Bank Trustees were bound to do justice to their creditors, to their trust, and to themselves; and it was extraordinary to see wise and just men like them brought to such a situation. Upon these grounds, therefore, he thought it his duty to give notice, that he should to-morrow move that immediate steps be taken to pay the money advanced by the Directors of the Bank to Government.

Mr. HARRISON said he was ready to give every accommoda-

tion on business of such importance both to the right honourable gentleman opposite, and his honourable friend. As in compliance with the wishes of the former, he deferred the motion of which he had given notice, he meant to have brought it forward to-morrow (this day) but finding that would be inconvenient to his honourable friend, he was again willing to postpone it, provided a day could be precisely fixed. He therefore gave notice that he should bring it forward on Monday, if an honourable gentleman (Mr. Ellis) would defer his motion, which stood for the order of that day.

Mr. ELLIS consented, and waved his intended motion respecting the slave trade to next Thursday.

Mr. FOX finding it would be inconvenient, in the present situation of affairs, to bring his promised motion forward for a repeal of the two bills passed the last Session of Parliament for the better security of His Majesty's person and government, discharged his order for that motion to-morrow, to to-morrow fortnight.

The order of the day for the House to take into consideration the Report of the Committee of Secrecy, appointed to inquire into the affairs of the Bank, having been read,

Mr. FOX moved, "That on account of the convenience of speaking oftener than once, the Reports might be taken into consideration in a Committee of the whole House."

The House having resolved itself into said Committee, Mr. Sylvester Douglas in the chair,

Mr. Chancellor PITT delivered himself as follows: I rise in consequence of the notice which I gave on a former day of my intention to make some propositions on the present state of public affairs, grounded on the Reports of the Secret Committee appointed to inquire into the affairs of the Bank, and the necessity of providing for the continuance of the operation of the Order in Council of the 26th of February last. These Reports relate to two distinct points—the state of the funds of the Bank, and the necessity of continuing the restriction by which the issue of specie is at present suspended. With respect to the first point, there undoubtedly appeared from the beginning of the discussion an almost universal persuasion of the solidity of the funds of that Corporation. It was the opinion of those who were most interested in its concerns, and it was readily adopted by persons more immediately conversant in pecuniary transactions, who evinced the sincerity of their confidence by the measures which they at first adopted, and the line of conduct they have since pursued. The Report of the Select Committee confirmed the general impression respecting the stability of its resources; and never till this day had he heard them questioned. That their

assets greatly exceed all demands which can be made on them cannot be disputed. The only part of the honourable gentleman's (Mr. Sheridan) speech on which I find myself called upon to make any observations, was that in which he denied that the eleven millions due from Government to the Bank formed any part of its funds. The fact is, the sum of eleven millions is the original capital of that Corporation. The security of every trader is the original capital that he has embarked in trade; to deny, therefore, that the original capital of the Bank, if it still remains unimpaired and secure, is part of their assets, is to deny every mercantile principle upon which security is constructed or trade carried on. When we look at the ultimate solidity of the funds of the Bank (and it is to their ultimate solidity that, at present, we ought to look), we must look at their original capital, at the amount of their good debt, in short, at every species of property which is available for the liquidation of their outstanding demands. The honourable gentleman seems in his ideas to have confounded the amount of the property of the Bank with another question wholly distinct from this; how far the Bank has carried on an advantageous trade? If we were to consider this question, the original capital could not certainly be brought into the account of gain. If the capital was diminished, then they would have lost by their trade, and if it was increased, they would have gained, but the capital in its original state could not be placed in the account of gain. This is a question, however, quite foreign to the present subject of discussion. It is not our business to inquire, for we have nothing to do with the internal economy of the Bank. Considering it as a Corporation, it is sufficient for the public to know that it is a rich Corporation, and that, were it now to close its accounts, it could divide among the holders of stock a sum considerably larger than the capital which they originally embarked in the firm. The honourable gentleman contends that this debt of eleven millions is not demandable from Government by the Bank, and that it ought only to be considered as the principal of a three per cent. annuity. But if Government found that the Bank was unfit for business, would it continue in its hands the monopoly of a business which it cannot manage, and whenever this monopoly is taken from them, this sum of eleven millions must be repaid? The object of inquiry was to ascertain the ultimate solidity of the Bank. Its ultimate solidity is asserted in the Report of the Secret Committee upon your table; and so far from being liable to any of the animadversions of the honourable gentleman in the inquiry, the Committee would not have done their duty had they not included this eleven millions among its assets. This is a part of

their debt, which rests upon the best possible security, because it rests upon the aggregate powers of the country. The Report of the Committee then confirms the opinion of the stability of the Bank, an opinion in which I had formerly the satisfaction of hearing every person concur, and which even the honourable gentleman himself expressed most decidedly, when the business was under discussion on a former day. But the inquiry into the state of the funds of the Bank is nearly connected with the question of the general policy of suspending for a time its payments in specie. A suspension of these payments is a step which certainly ought not to be taken excepting in a case of the most urgent necessity. If this necessity, however, at present exists, and, after the Report of the Secret Committee it cannot admit of doubt, we must submit to the adoption of a measure, which certainly it would be desirable in other circumstances to avoid, not, however, without the important consolation that, notwithstanding the temporary embarrassments arising from a combination of causes afterwards to be inquired into, there are funds amply sufficient for the security of those who cannot have their demands satisfied for a time. When I come to consider the second Report, with all due respect for the Committee, I must own that I lament exceedingly, their having confined themselves within narrower limits than what I understood to be the province of their inquiry. We had formerly some discussion upon the difficulty of discriminating precisely between the existence of the necessity and the cause by which it has been produced, and perhaps it is impossible to draw the exact line between them. But without entering at all into minute distinctions, plain sense teaches us that there is a difference between an event and its cause. And when a Committee was appointed to inquire into the necessity of the Bank suspending its payment in specie, I did conceive that they would have inquired into the necessity of taking, as well as of continuing the measure. They have only reported, however, upon the necessity of continuing it, without expressing any opinion upon the propriety of having adopted it. But according to this Report, it now appears to be necessary. I admit that it may have become necessary, merely in consequence of having been adopted; in reasoning therefore upon its continuance, I shall not consider the Reports as sanctioning the issue of the Order in Council. I cannot read the Report, however, without believing it to have been the opinion of the Committee, that the continuance of its operation is necessary for a time; for what time is another question; I certainly feel the necessity of it on very different grounds, than because it has once been taken; but all I wish now is, that the House will proceed upon the recommendation of the Committee.

What may be the proper time for continuing it, and how far it may be proper to entrust Government with the power of shortening the definite time that may be fixed, or how far it may be wise to leave it to their discretion to prolong the period of its operation, if it should be necessary beyond that definite time ; will be matter for discussion in the progress of the bill. I shall now only move, that the Chairman be directed to move for leave to bring in a bill, to continue and confirm the Order in Council of the 26th of February, for a time to be limited. The House will feel that by agreeing to this motion, they will sanction the prohibition with their legislative authority, and the consequent propriety of extending their protection at the same time that they extend their authority. It will be easily seen that I allude to a Bill of Indemnity to those who upon their own responsibility issued an Order, which certainly was illegal, and could only be justified by the urgent necessity of the moment. I am aware that it does not yet appear, whether Ministers ought or ought not to be indemnified, nor do I think that this is the proper time for such a discussion, because Parliament cannot form any judgement of a measure professing to have been taken on necessity, till the existence of that necessity is ascertained. The honourable gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) has thrown out some doubts respecting the necessity of continuing the measure, and these doubts are founded upon the necessity of adopting it. But, I understood that it was decidedly the sense of the House, that the necessity of adopting as well as of continuing the measure, was a subject proper only for discussion in a Secret Committee ; for surely the necessity of taking the measure was a question of as great delicacy, and in the agitation of which as much caution ought to be observed, as the necessity of continuing it. Since then the subject can only come with propriety before a Secret Committee, I hope I shall be excused from debating it on the present occasion. But the honourable gentleman brings his arguments near to the present subject, when he maintains that were Government to discharge the debts they owe to the Bank, this would do away the necessity of adopting, or rather of sanctioning, the present measure. I am here entitled to assume that at least he must see things in a different point of view from the Committee, since this naturally came within the province of their inquiry, and has not been suggested by them as a measure adequate to meet the necessity of the times. But with respect to the measure itself, I shall not pretend to say, how far it may not be applicable in future as a remedy for some of those evils which may have contributed to produce the present necessity ; all I will maintain, and it is enough for my present purpose, is, that it is not a measure at all calculated, even supposing

that could be instantly executed, to operate as a remedy for the difficulties of the moment. But the honourable gentleman did not recollect that a measure of the nature that he proposes requires considerable previous arrangement ; that it must be subject to meet discussion, and that a great deal of time must necessarily elapse before it can take effect. The remedy then which he suggests is a proof itself, that in the interval, the measure which has been already taken, ought to be continued. He expresses a hope, that I will not be so childish as to deny, that were Government to pay the debts they owe to the Bank, it would not operate as a relief to that Corporation, because it would not be paid off in cash. Now, Sir, it is very easy to apply this or any other epithet to this or any other argument, and it would be very easy for me to apply the same epithet to a contrary opinion, and leave the House to judge between us ; but notwithstanding the epithet, I will venture to assert that though Government were to pay all the debt they owe to the bank, it would not go to alter the quantity of cash. And if the object be to re-establish a due proportion between the cash and the notes of the Bank, I will put it to any mercantile man in the House whether this can be done without increasing this cash, but merely by taking their notes out of circulation. A considerable reduction of notes may be wise, but to pay off all the debt due by Government to the Bank is neither practicable within a short time, nor even though it were practicable, would it have the desired effect. The first motion, therefore, which I shall propose is, that the operation of the Order in Council shall be continued under the authority of a Committee of the Legislature for a time to be limited ; and if this motion is agreed to, I shall then propose that the same Committee shall be revived, in order to inquire into the necessity of taking the measure, and also to investigate the causes which gave rise to that necessity. There is another motion of which I gave notice, and which I shall certainly take an early opportunity of submitting to the House, namely, that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the whole state of the finances of the country. Steps cannot be taken too soon to ascertain and put upon record every thing that relates to the real situation and resources of the country ; and in that prospect I shall only say that I entertain the most sanguine hopes that, however severely we may feel the pressure of present difficulties, whatever difference of opinion may prevail respecting the conduct of Government, and however much the nation may feel from the variety and weight of its burdens, the wealth of the country is great, and that it still possesses a vast extent of solid resources. I wish most earnestly that this inquiry may extend as far

as consistently with propriety and a due regard to the public service it can be carried. It is my desire that it may embrace the whole amount of the burdens incurred since the commencement of the war, and the means provided for defraying them; the whole amount of the burdens that may be necessary for the present year, accompanied with the examination of the measures which have been taken for the reduction of the national debt, together with a scrutiny into the public expences, with a view if possible to abridge them, consistently with the interests of the public service. I would caution gentlemen, however, against rashly deciding upon the possibility of this reduction, before they inquire whether the service performed can either be dispensed with or purchased at a cheaper rate. On these grounds I shall move, That the Chairman be instructed to move for leave to bring in a bill to confirm and continue the Order in Council of the 26th of February, for a time to be limited.

Mr. FOX spoke to the following effect:—Before I proceed to consider the different points which the right honourable gentleman proposes to submit to the House, I must beg leave to say a few words with regard to the first Report of the Secret Committee, and their statement of the assets of which the Bank is possessed. I think that the Committee did what was fair in stating to the House the sum of eleven millions of permanent debt due by Government, because in the manner in which it was stated there could be no intention to deceive, as the Committee could not but be sensible that the House would understand the true nature of this debt, and the proper light in which it was to be viewed. I nevertheless think that my honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan) was perfectly correct in the observations he made upon this subject. Is there any man so ignorant—can there be any Member of the House so ill informed, as to consider that sum as available to its utmost extent, or assets which in case of necessity the Bank could employ? It is in fact an annuity of 330,000*l.* which Government may or may not, as it thinks proper, redeem. But, says the right honourable gentleman, if the Bank should cease to answer the purposes for which it was intended, and terminate its operations, you can withdraw the monopoly which you have allowed it. But without supposing a case of absolute ruin and total annihilation, may not the Bank be placed in a situation in which it is desirous to redeem its debts, and to avail itself of all its means? In this case you must consider to what extent this sum could be reckoned upon, and how far it would be available. In this view then, it must be evident to every one, that this sum of eleven millions cannot be taken as an effectual debt to that amount

equal to such a demand, but only as a redeemable annuity of 330,000*l*. The right honourable gentleman says, that the first Report of the Committee has had the effect to confirm the opinion which previously obtained of the Bank of the complete solvency. Upon this point, I confess, that my sentiments are precisely the same they were before. Yet, I must consider the Report as productive of, at least, one very useful and important consequence, if it has induced the right honourable gentleman to abandon the intention which he announced of guaranteeing the notes of the Bank with the sanction of Government; from the fullest reflection I am convinced that the more you identify the Bank with the Government, the more you make it dependant upon the measures of Administration; the more you cement an union, calculated not for permanent good, but for temporary expediency, you increase the source from which our misfortunes have sprung, and cause a great additional calamity to those with which the country is already oppressed. With regard to the second Report of the Committee, the right honourable gentleman laments that the Report is so limited; the right honourable gentleman and the House will do me the justice to acknowledge, that upon a former discussion, I stated that the words of the reference to the Committee did limit their inquiries, an opinion which the Committee, by their Report, have proved to have been well founded. The right honourable gentleman says, that they ought to have gone into the necessity which produced the Order of Council; to an investigation of this kind, it was essential that an inquiry into the causes should take place; what were to be considered as proximate and what remote causes, or into what extent the inquiry should branch, were subjects for the discretion of the Committee, as the right honourable gentleman himself had admitted; but to have enabled the Committee to enter upon the inquiry to any good, and to have put it in their power to exercise that discretion, the Order under which they were to act should have been large and comprehensive, affording a latitude which discretion should modify; but with regard to what the Committee actually have reported, I must confess that it appears to me, that they have reported nothing that is not self evident. There is no subtle, no metaphysical distinction necessary to demonstrate that there exists a very great difference between the necessity of at first resorting to the measure and the necessity of continuing it. I have no hesitation to say, that the very issuing and acting upon such a measure creates the necessity of its continuance. Whatever may be thought of the embarrassments which previously existed, and the demand on which it was immediately founded, there can be no difference of opinion as to the run

which would ensue, and the drain which would be experienced, on the order being abruptly taken off. Although I thus recognize the necessity of continuing the Order for some time, it does not follow that we should be insensible of the importance of my honourable friend's observations. I confess I am not so sanguine of the effects of the measure he proposes, as to imagine that it will supersede the necessity of continuing the Order of Council, but I am convinced it will tend to limit its duration. The right honourable gentleman says, that my honourable friend's proposal requires time in order to produce any good effect. Admitted; and this is the very reason why it ought to be adopted; but there is another reason why we ought to embrace it, which, in a moment so critical as the present, ought to be felt with the deepest interest, and to operate with the greatest energy. It is the performance of the most sacred duty to the House and to the country. It involves the character of the public representatives, and the honour of the nation. If the Order of Council be not merely a notification that the Bank is not to make payments in cash, if it is not merely accident which turns the finances from their usual channel, but a blow to public credit, and a wound to the public prosperity; if we are compelled by due necessity to continue so fatal, so eventful a measure, we ought at least to accompany it with the substantial and consolatory conviction, that we are taking measures to remove its necessity, and to limit its duration. At present I beg the question, that the payment to the Bank which my honourable friend proposes would produce the desired effect; at least it would be important to show to the world that we are eager to apply a remedy to the distresses under which we labour. In the lawful circumstances of being compelled to avow, and to sanction by legislative authority an act of bankruptcy, it is some consolation to think that we accompany it with a measure that tends to prevent its fatal consequences. It is weighty and important for the public to see that their representatives are alive to the seriousness of their situation, and active to repair the calamities to which the country is reduced; but the right honourable gentleman says, that as the payment which Government could make to the Bank must be in paper, it could not have the effect of enabling the Bank to make their payments in cash. Here I beg leave to refer to what the right honourable gentleman said on a former occasion, that the advances by the Bank to Government were in paper. Without determining whether the epithet of childish is justly applied to the right honourable gentleman's argument, or what other epithet belongs to it; I must say, however, that his distinction is not a little extraordinary. Does it not occur to every gentleman in

the House, however, that there is a very great difference between paper equivalent to cash, and paper for which cash cannot be obtained? When the Bank advanced five millions, for instance, of paper convertible into cash, that paper issued by Government for various services became so much additional paper, for which the Bank was liable to be called upon for cash. The case now, indeed, is far different. It certainly is less relief to the Bank to pay in paper than pay in specie: you do not in the one case positively add to the quantity of specie which the Bank possesses, but you may diminish the amount of the paper for which they are liable, and so increase their ability to meet what remains. Upon this important point I cannot agree with the right honourable gentleman. If you do pay in paper, you at least diminish the disproportion between cash and paper, which certainly adds greatly to the present embarrassments. In the view of the case which the right honourable gentleman holds out, the difficulties which the country experiences are owing to the want of a circulating medium, Government preventing the Bank from increasing the circulating medium, is in their own view of the subject an evil to be removed. I have no hesitation in saying, however, that the most desirable mode of remedying the embarrassment which the Bank experiences, would be by an increase of cash; but if the disproportion between specie and paper produced that state of things which terminated in a public act of bankruptcy, and a notorious breach of faith, I consider a diminution of the quantity by a payment in paper would contribute to lessen the evil under which we now labour. With regard to the functions of the Bank, I disagree entirely from the right honourable gentleman. The Bank should do nothing inconsistent with the interest of the proprietors for whom they act. When the Directors of the Bank consider the public interest, instead of that of the Proprietors, they depart from their proper sphere, and the effect of their conduct is to sacrifice their private interest and the public good. Let the functions of the Bank and of Parliament be kept distinct, and they are both exercised to the public advantage. Let the Directors of the Bank pursue their private interests, and attend their own concerns; let Parliament and Ministers devote their attention to public measures: this is an arrangement which suits better with their respective objects, and conduces best to their proper ends, instead of that union of duties in which every thing is confounded, and that distraction of pursuits in which every thing is destroyed. That a diminution of discount and of the issue of paper ought to take place, I have no difficulty in saying. That this would be attended with inconvenience cannot be doubted. But, on the other hand, this

inconvenience ought to be compared with those no less real evils which it would tend to remove. The advantages and disadvantages ought to be balanced ; the House should determine whether any of the consequences which it would involve, are equal to the mischiefs which our present state presents. In reality the Bank ought to be viewed as unconnected with Government. That they ought to regard the public interest is certainly true, but this object they are most likely to attain by a wise prosecution of their own. I know nothing in the Charter of the Bank that binds them to discount to any particular extent, or to discount at all. I find, however, from the experience of one hundred happy years, that they have gone on in supplying this accommodation with advantage to themselves and to the public. The Bank, however, must have been aware of the situation in which they were placed ; they must have been sensible that the drain of cash they experienced would reduce them to a state when they could no longer pay in specie. They do not seem upon this prospect to have acted with that prudence and discretion which they ought to have exerted. They ought to have adopted measures to increase their cash, and to diminish the paper which caused the demand. They ought to have done what, in similar circumstances, a prudent individual would have done. They ought to have narrowed their concerns for a time, to gain that credit which would afterwards have enabled them to have pursued their operations with increased prosperity and success. The conduct which the Minister thought proper to prescribe, however, was directly the reverse. He boldly resolved to defraud the public creditor, to violate the faith of all engagements, rather than that the Bank should narrow their discounts, or discontinue their advances to Government. I shall ask, how are you to increase the quantity of cash in proportion to the increased circulation of paper ? To increase its quantity is not in your power—but do at least what you can—avail yourselves of the remedy you possess ; diminish the quantity of paper, and reduce that disproportion which exists between paper and specie. This, at least, is in your power, and to a certain extent its good effects will be felt. Does the right honourable gentleman think that by giving a forced circulation to paper, he will be able to draw cash from the lurking places to which it may have retired, or turn the course of foreign exchange so much in our favour as to remove the difficulties under which we labour ? It may be said that in this manner you strike at commerce, you suspend industry, and strike at the sources of revenue. There are certainly many nice considerations upon the subject which are not to be lightly treated. It is one of the accumulated evils of our situation,

that it is impossible to embrace any remedy which applies to the evil which affects the country upon the one hand, without committing some injury to it upon the other. He who talks of plans, of positive plans to go at once to the disease; who hopes to produce great good without hazarding a mixture of evil, is not the person from whom, in a situation like the present, much advantage is to be expected. Such plans are those of the visionary projector, who arranges his plan without considering the circumstances in which it is to operate. All that is left is a choice of evils. He that talks rationally will rejoice if he can discover a remedy that with some evil will be able to overcome the mortality of the disease. Here, as in every other instance, the dictates of wisdom do not clash with the precepts of morality. No one concealment should be attempted in the affairs of the Bank. The Bank should have but one object, that of performing their engagements and discharging their debts. We have heard of the phrase "Perish Commerce, let the Constitution live." The exclamation of the Bank should be "Perish Commerce, provided we pay our debts," and if any temporary inconvenience should be felt, their unsullied integrity and unimpeached credit would be the pledge of their ample restoration and increased prosperity. If, by the narrowing of discounts, commerce should sink under temporary difficulties, it would revive vigorous and powerful from that credit which had fallen to support it. Such a decisive measure would, in every view of policy, be more favourable to commerce and to prosperity, than a sickly existence and lingering expedients. By acting upon these plain and natural principles, some good may be obtained. Any thing else will prove false and delusory. The Bank ought to act for the advantage of their constituents, and in doing so they will best promote the benefit of the public. Any other miserable expedients will only increase the evil which they are intended to remove. Suppose, for instance, that Government were to pay five or six millions to the Bank in paper, which the Bank was to destroy, and that, though it produced a temporary stagnation, it restored the solvency of the Bank, and enabled them to make their payments in cash. By this means credit (if credit can at all be revived after it has received so fatal a shock), being revived and confidence restored, I would ask, if the revival of commerce would not immediately follow? I would ask, too, if credit is destroyed, is its return equally certain; would its revival be equally soon? This is the measure of prudence, and, in the view of policy, that which it would be wise to adopt. But when you consider, that along with this you fulfil your engagements to the public creditor, that the Bank is put in a situation to discharge

its notes in cash, can you hesitate to embrace an alternative by which you can preserve your honour, and pursue your interest? Expedients will turn out as expedients usually do. A projector is never tired by disappointment. If the right honourable gentleman, however, recollects the many expedients which he has already employed, some of them plausible, some of them calculated perhaps to produce a little good, if he reflects in the last fourteen months, he will be convinced how unavailing are projects opposed to the natural stream of things, how futile it is, by such resources, to supply an expenditure, monstrous and extravagant, he will be tired of the repetition of such delusions, and disgusted with the prospect of fresh disappointments. But the right honourable gentleman, I am afraid, is not to be deterred by experience. Two months hence we shall be discussing some new expedient of the right honourable gentleman, till at length the beginning of bankruptcy, which we have already witnessed, proceeding from one progress to another, terminates in complete insolvency. I do not say that the right honourable gentleman's expedients were all bad, but they were not sufficient to remedy the evil.

Trusting to inefficient expedients, we at length find ourselves in the gulph in which we are now plunged. It is now time to recur to fundamental principles, and to act upon them strictly. Without this there is no hopes of redeeming the country, no chance of escaping the ruin by which we are threatened. With regard to the ideas which the right honourable gentleman threw out, so far as they go, they have my approbation. The first of the proposals he makes is, to take a complete view of our financial situation. There was a time when a motion for an inquiry of this nature was made two years ago, and when the country might have been saved, when the embarrassments that have been experienced might have been prevented, and the necessity of the Order of Council avoided. Last year too, had the motion of my honourable friend (Mr. Grey), to that effect, been listened to, we should not now have been discussing how the public creditor was to be paid. But the House goes on confiding till an act of bankruptcy is passed, and then they think of inquiring. It is the fate of all the right honourable gentleman's projects to come too late. The proposals of peace which he made in December last, would have been accepted in 1794, or in the beginning of 1796: but when they were out of date, when the moment at which they would have been received has passed away, he makes proposals, which, in proper time, would have saved the country. How long is this system to be allowed to go on? How long are we to be doomed to go on? How long are we to be

doomed to sustain this ruinous, this destructive war, which all thinking men now join to execrate, because the right honourable gentleman is wise too late, and discovers that line of conduct, which it is too late to pursue with success? Let the right honourable gentleman look back, and he will see many instances in which the interests of the country have been sacrificed by his tardy wisdom. Perhaps now he may be prepared to offer terms of peace, which a few months ago would have been accepted with eagerness. At length, after having so obstinately resisted it, he comes forward and tells us, that it is proper to inquire. Late, however, as this inquiry is to be granted, it will be attended with one good effect. It will, I hope, lead to a declaration, that the calamities in which we are involved have been brought upon us, to say no more, by the errors of Ministers, and by the confidence of the last Parliament. It will demonstrate, that the country has been led to the brink of destruction by Parliament relinquishing the principle of the Constitution, and the customs of our ancestors. The House trusted when it ought to have inquired; and we are now told that we are to enquire, when it is doubtful whether inquiry can save, and when the punishment of the delinquent is the only consolation that remains for calamities which cannot be remedied, and errors that cannot be retrieved. Of late it has been too much the practice to give up the privileges which the Constitution secures; it has been the fashion to wish to change a free Government into an absolute Monarchy. For my own part, I declare that no exigency shall prevail upon me to consent to increase the power of the Crown. It is still my opinion, that the measure which the Council adopted, if necessary, should have originated in this House. The real cause of all our calamities has been, that, whether by its own power, or the connivance of Parliament, the Crown has swallowed up the whole Government. I know, that if this inquiry had been sooner undertaken, there was a chance for salvation. Is there a man who thinks, that after this House felt and acknowledged that peace with France had become practicable, that if men had fairly told what they thought, and acted from their conviction, peace might not have been obtained? But servility, base servility, has been the ruin of this country. There must now be a total change of measures, a radical change of system. We must see a system of things restored under which men will speak their minds without a mean consideration of interest, and a base dependance upon Ministers. The great object which we ought to pursue upon the present occasion, is to abridge as much as possible the duration of the measure which has become necessary. I hope it will be short, but I hope too, that no power will be given to the

Crown to suspend its force. Parliament ought to sit expressly for this bill ; and though it were to sit five years together, the Minister, who should advise His Majesty to prorogue it till this measure is disposed of, would commit an act for which he would deserve to be impeached. The calamities of this country come so thick, that still some new one presses on ; for all the consequences of misfortune cannot be calculated. The measure which it has now become necessary to sanction is attended with many aggravating circumstances. Among the dividends already due, there are many which have not actually been received. Suppose that a dividend had become due on the 5th of January, and that the person having no immediate use for the money, allows it to remain in the Bank, relying on the faith of Government that it is actually paid. Government, however, like Lady Townley in the play, cries, " Stop, don't pay that money, I have other purposes to serve with it ;" and because it has the key of the chest where it is deposited, in violation of all faith and honour, seizes on the cash which had in reality been paid, and gives something else for which specie cannot be obtained. If such be the necessity, surely any situation is preferable to this. Whatever may be the temporary consequences to individual traders, or to general commerce, can they be put in balance with avowed bankruptcy, with flagrant breach of faith and undisguised robbery ? As a confirmation of the Order of Council has become necessary, I shall not negative the measure proposed by the right honourable gentleman. With respect to the inquiry, I think that the mode by Secret Committee ought not to be adopted. The right honourable gentleman says, that I had no objection to a Secret Committee ; as to the inquiry into the quantity of cash the Bank had, I had no objection that the inquiry should be conducted by a Secret Committee ; but for inquiry into the causes of the necessity, I was against that kind of Committee. I likewise thought a Secret Committee better than none ; a Secret Committee I conceive to be, a species of Committee where none but those who compose it are admitted, and that it contains a warning, that certain things may come before it not fit to be divulged. But I shall take the sense of the House upon the point, whether the former Committee shall be received. I shall not repeat the argument used formerly against a Committee by ballot, they apply in all their force to the present. After all that has been said of the dignity of the House, and the cant of minorities, I am warranted by history and experience in saying, that a Committee by ballot is always nominated by the Minister ; and, I think, the House ought to perceive that this is not a moment for such practices. It is to the negligence of Parliament about its best

privileges, it is to that confidence which it has so fatally bestowed, that after being driven to the necessity of factiousing an act of bankruptcy, we are for the first time to inquire into the state of our affairs.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that he wished to revive the former Committee, and to have another Committee appointed, to inquire into the whole state of the finance. The mode he should propose, would be to elect it by ballot.

Colonel PORTER made some remarks on the manner in which the last Committee had been chosen, and disapproved of the circulating of lists, with a view to influence the choice of the Members who were to compose it. One list was called "the House List;" to others, other appellations were given. Surely this was not the best mode for impartially collecting the real sentiments of the House.

Lord HAWKESBURY was sensible that the subject now under the discussion of the House, was of a nature, the most delicate and important that could possibly be agitated; and the greater was its delicacy and importance, the greater, in his opinion, ought to be the attention bestowed on it, and the calmer the investigation it ought to undergo. He could not, therefore, forbear expressing his surprize at the warm language that fell from the right honourable gentleman opposite him (Mr Fox). It was asserted this night, and on former occasions, by that right honourable gentleman, that the country, from the nature of its present circumstances, was in a state of bankruptcy; but in no point of view was the term bankruptcy applicable to the present condition of the country. The term was not applicable to it, either in point of law, or of common reason. A mere stoppage of payment could not surely be considered with justice as an act of bankruptcy, when it is proved, beyond a doubt, that there are substantial funds and real resources far exceeding what was necessary to answer every just demand of creditors. Such, he was happy to find, was the present situation of the Bank, from whatever causes its temporary embarrassments might be supposed to arise. These embarrassments were principally imputed to the scarcity or want of specie. But were this the truth, did it therefore follow that the Bank was poor? Undoubtedly not. Money, it is well known, cannot justly be regarded as wealth; it is only the representative of wealth; it even not unfrequently happens, that this scarcity of specie may be most experienced, when solid wealth is most considerably increased. And, indeed, if we but duly attend to what constitutes real wealth, and estimate it on any one criterion, it will be found that our present circumstances, instead of depressing

us with despondency, should invigorate our hopes, and that we have no reason to despair, but, on the contrary, every reason to be satisfied : for if we examine into the usual causes that may be supposed to produce temporary difficulties, similar to those in which we now seem to be involved, it will be difficult to trace out the embarrassments to any of them ; if we look to our internal, or our foreign trade, it will scarce be found to have ever been more flourishing ; nor does this assertion now call for any proof : it has already been demonstrated by such a variety of evidence, that it would now be superfluous to adduce any. Indeed there is no one criterion to which we can resort, but what abundantly proves the sufficiency of our funds, and the solidity of our resources. However our credit may now seem to be transiently affected by a scarcity of guineas, if we look to the price of land, we find it higher than at any period of any former war. What, therefore, may have occasioned the present want of specie, it was not his intention elaborately to inquire. In the first place, it might be attributed to the extent of our paper currency, and to the enormous quantity of imaginary capital now floating in the country. But did this rationally account for it ? Surely not ; for the industry of the country was not set at work by specie, but by the credit of the individual, whether banker or manufacturer, who held out employment and encouragement to industrious hands. It might with more reason be ascribed to the enormous increase of our trade and commerce ; the sudden disappearance of specie might also be imputed to the dread of invasion, or to any other panic that may have causelessly seized on the public mind ; but these were surmises, on which it was not his intention any longer to dwell.

It was his Lordship's wish rather to meet the argument principally insisted on by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox). That right honourable gentleman seemed very deliberately to assert, that it was the interest of the Public that our paper currency should be diminished. To corroborate this assertion, he insinuated a comparison between a private trader and the Bank of England ; but most assuredly in no one point of view can they be fairly and justly compared. The Bank of England should be regarded as the centre of all our commerce, and should any diminution or detriment affect this spring and sinew of our commercial energies, our commercial wealth must be proportionally impaired. Nay, the arguments of the right honourable gentleman go directly to demolish what he seems so anxious to preserve : for by diminishing the revenue, you surely cannot increase public credit ; and by cramping the circulation of paper currency, you contract the sphere of our commercial

puruits ; and by this effect the public at large, and the public creditors, will be more materially injured, than in all the other oppositions that have been stated. It might be prudent and wise, he confessed, to extend the operation of Sir George Saville's laws, and thus secure a larger quantity of specie in the country. But though this were effected, it would not follow that our paper circulation should be diminished ; such a diminution would be attended with the most pernicious consequences, and prove far more prejudicial to the public creditor, and to public credit, than any of the cares so strongly urged by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox).

His Lordship concluded by recommending the consideration of our present difficulties to the attention of the House, as a matter of the greatest delicacy and importance ; and he contended, that those very difficulties arose from no other causes, but such as were intimately connected with the real wealth and prosperity of the country.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL said, he agreed with the noble Lord who spoke last, that specie was not the only indication of the wealth of a state, or of an individual ; there might be many cases in which it would be manifest, on the examination of his affairs, that an individual was extremely rich, although at the time of that examination that individual was not in the actual possession of a single shilling. From the manner in which commerce was now carried on, it was impossible that specie should be the only representative of wealth or property. If every man was to make a demand upon his debtor of payment in specie, of what was due to him, there would be found but few individuals in this commercial country who would be able to discharge their debts ; very few, indeed, who had any extensive dealings in trade. That was the case with the Bank at the present moment ; but it was unfair to call the stoppage of payment in specie a bankruptcy ; the Bank might be, and was, solvent, and even very rich, although they were at this moment unable to pay all demands upon them in cash. He apprehended also, that this non-payment of Bank notes with cash could not be called a fraud, because the public knew perfectly well that from circumstances, that this was an event which might happen. He apprehended, that the measure which had been adopted by Government, and pursued by the Bank, was a measure of wise and salutary precaution, well calculated to prevent a great evil. If a great number of people were in a great theatre, and there was a false alarm of fire given, he apprehended that the door-keepers could not do better than to prevent the people going out in large parties in

great hurry, but should endeavour to let them go out only by degrees ; or were they even to shut them in for a time, he apprehended that would be the means of preventing a much greater evil. Such he considered to be the tendency of the present stoppage of payment at the Bank at this moment. A very large demand was made at almost every banking-house in the kingdom, and particularly at the Bank, for payment in cash ; and this sudden demand it was which created this temporary difficulty and embarrassment. It was well known, that if at any time the whole of the creditors of the Bank should demand payment in cash of all that was due to them, it would be impossible for the Bank to comply with such demands. So it was with every considerable banker, merchant, or trader, in the kingdom ; but inability thus to pay cash did not by any means prove insolvency. If the run which lately took place upon the Bank for payment in cash had been permitted to continue, the ruin of the Bank must have followed very soon. If the creditor was to insist upon having cash in that manner, the consequence must very speedily have been, that no cash would have been left at the Bank ; and therefore the step which Government took upon this occasion, was a step to prevent the total ruin of the Bank, and with it the ruin of public credit ; for the ruin of public credit must have been the consequence of leaving the Bank without any money at all ; but that evil had been averted by the measure which had been adopted. But gentlemen had said much of the public creditor ; were they not aware that the holder of a Bank note, or a person who had demands upon the Bank, was not the only public creditor of this country ? There were other public creditors, to whose convenience it became us to be attentive—he meant the army and navy ; he apprehended them to be as much public creditors, as the holders of Bank notes could be, and their situation was such as particularly to require payment of what was due to them in cash, more so than any other description of men in this country. If, therefore, what was lately going on at the Bank, was such as would very soon have left them without any specie, and that therefore they would have been disabled altogether from paying any more in that manner, Government were called upon to take the measure they had taken ; it was a measure which was so far from being inconsistent with public faith, that it had for its object the preservation and maintenance of public faith. Much had been said on the constitution of the Bank of England : it was for the holder of Bank stock only that such constitution was formed, and this was declared in the charter of the Bank. It was instituted, as every other corporation was, for public purposes and benefits. The benefit of the holder

of stock was an inferior object. The Bank, from the very nature of its charter, was bound to accommodate the nation ; and, therefore, when it was said that the Bank had a duty to the holder of stock, it should be remembered they had a duty also to the public, which, on occasion of public emergency, it was essential they should perform, for that was the great object of their institution ; and if they did not perform the public purposes, for which they were instituted, the power which created might also destroy them. All their original power was granted to them for public purposes ; and, upon every principle on which they were created, they might also be destroyed, if they were guilty of any thing that amounted to a breach of that public duty. The Bank, therefore, must assist the Government of the country : he apprehended it to be their duty so to do when any occasion required it, and he apprehended it to be particularly their duty in the present instance. From these observations he was led to say, that all the illustrations which had been made by comparing the condition of the Bank to that of a private banker, were without foundation.

As to the subject of the eleven millions now due from Government to the Bank, the Committee would recollect how that originated. It originated in a subscription of certain individuals, for which there was to be an interest at the rate of three per cent. ; and that deposit was held afterwards by Government as a pledge for the payment of Bank notes, and was a security for the payment of demands that might be made upon the Bank, that sum was from time to time increased, until it amounted to eleven millions and upwards, upon which an annuity of three per cent. was paid to the holder of Bank stock, to which a dividend of three per cent. more had been added. But the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) was wrong in his calculation upon that subject. It was difficult to estimate the precise value of the stock, but according to the price which it now bore, he apprehended it would produce, if sold, between fifteen and sixteen millions ; for this was not to be considered only as a capital, but, if sold, there would go with it the good-will of the trade ; and therefore it was worth very considerable more than the eleven millions capital stock. If put up to sale, he believed the sum which it would bring, as he had said already, would be between fifteen and sixteen millions. This proved not only the solvency, but the very considerable surplus which the Bank had, over and above even what the Committee had stated them to possess. He must now recur to the necessity of issuing the Order in Council. It was clear that, however affluent the Bank actually were, they could not pay all demands upon them in specie, because they could not convert their

property into specie, and it would be impossible for commerce to go on if the Bank was drained of all its specie; this specie could not return until the course of commerce should bring it back again to the Bank. Whether the measure which was adopted by Government was a wise measure or not, was foreign to this part of the argument; but he maintained that it was so far from being a breach of faith, that it enabled the Bank to keep their faith with the public. The consideration now before the Committee was, whether the measure should or should not be continued? And it did not appear to him that there was any difference of opinion upon the point. Some other measures might be suggested as a remedy in the present case; but the only one he had heard mentioned was, that of payment of the debt due from the Public to the Bank. A considerable part of that was a floating debt of advance upon the produce of taxes, which was continually coming, and which debt was therefore in the course of reducing it. He apprehended that we should not diminish the number of bank notes, for we wanted them as a circulating medium; and if an attempt was made to bring them nearly upon a level with the quantity, not of the property, but the cash of the Bank, we might expect to see the Bank soon without Bank notes, or without cash sufficient to carry on the purposes of commerce. He apprehended, if this necessary restriction was continued for a reasonable time, the course of trade would bring specie back again, and then the embarrassment would be over.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, that if he had not known the Minister pretty well, and that he knew that many of his adherents carried their system much farther than their leader, he should have been more astonished at the present plan than he was, even desperate as that plan was; for if the speeches of the noble Lord, and the learned gentleman who had just spoken, had conveyed the sentiments of the Minister, and if we were to follow them, then, indeed, there could be nothing so desperate as the situation to which we are reduced, in reasoning as well as in finance. According to one of these orators, a forced paper currency was better than specie, and our commerce will increase greatly in proportion as we violate the principles of honesty in paying our public debts. He thought that paper was only a good thing while we had the means of converting it into cash; but the noble Lord thought it not only a cleaner, neater, and more portable and convenient medium to represent property; but it was the very essence of wealth itself, even when it could not be converted into specie, and that the flourishing state of our commerce was the cause of this inability to produce specie to answer demands upon the Bank of England; why, really, until he heard such non-

sense, he could not possibly have concluded that any such would have been uttered in that House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, although he could not countenance, had given birth to this kind of reasoning; and he wished for his convenience he could carry it into practice. What a pleasant thing it would be, to be able to shew from day to day, that the inability of the Government to discharge the demands, that were made upon it, was owing to the enormous increase of its wealth! What an entertainment it would be to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to sit in his office, and to receive all collectors of the revenue in all its branches, of customs, excise, and all the other taxes of this country, who should tell him they had all been out, and had done their duty most diligently, but that the capital of every man on whom they intended to levy taxes, was so enormously increased that they were not any of them enabled to pay a single shilling! and yet such arguments from the collector of taxes could not be more absurd than the arguments that had been urged to-night. The evil which was now the subject of complaint, had been apprehended to arise from one of two causes; perhaps from both. The one was, that enormous sums of money had been sent abroad; the other, that men had been alarmed, and had locked up vast quantities of specie in their coffers; and for this evil, it was supposed, to issue an enormous quantity of paper would be a remedy. Those who thought so, he would venture to say, did not understand the nature of the evil.

The learned gentleman had entered into the nature of the constitution of the Bank. He told gentlemen opposite to him, that they were extremely ignorant of the nature of the constitution of the Bank; he told them, that they mistook the meaning of the act of the fifth of King William, and that that act did not constitute the charter of the Bank for the private purposes of paying its creditors, but for the public purpose of assisting Government; and that, if they did not answer this original and public purpose, the same power which created might also destroy them—a pretty good threat, and a little more intelligible than had ever before been given them. Now, that very *learned* gentleman who has accused others of being ignorant of the constitution of the Bank, had not, he was convinced he had not, read one syllable of the constitution of the Bank; for if he had, he could not have uttered such gross and palpable absurdities about it. The Bank instituted to accommodate Government! No such thing, nor any thing like it. They lent the money to which the learned gentleman alluded, and which was now said to have accumulated to eleven millions, for a particular advantage which they purchased by so lending; but so far was it from being

considered at that time, that it was to be the duty of the Bank to lend money to Government in future, whenever Government might apply for it, or when Government might want it, that the very act of Parliament expressed an apprehension of evil effects from too great a facility in lending money from the Bank to Government, and therefore provided against it; and therefore the act expressed, that no money should be advanced by the Bank to Government, except from sums that shall have been previously voted by Parliament, and this was prohibited under a penalty of treble the sum advanced to be forfeited by the Directors who should so advance it; so that this act, by which their constitution was created, had it in view that the Bank should never become what the present Government had endeavoured to make them, too successfully, the mere tools and engines of the King's Ministers. And here it was impossible for him to abstain from adverting to the manner in which the provisions of this salutary act have been got rid of. This being the law of the land, the Bank Directors would be bound to observe it; but at the commencement of the war, a bill was brought in to do away the effect of the act altogether; not, indeed, under that title, nor was there any notice of such intention, but a clause was smuggled into an act of Parliament, avowedly brought in for another purpose, by which clause that provision in the act of King William, which prohibited the Bank making any advances to Government, upon any but sums expressly voted by Parliament, was repealed. The Directors had before that time advanced money to Government against law, they were indemnified for that illegal act, and were enabled to do so hereafter, for that wholesome provision of the act of King William, by which they were forbidden to do it, was now repealed. That repeal was the cause of our present calamity. Immediately after this, one million five hundred thousand pounds was advanced by the Bank to Government, and was paid into the Treasury; and now the House would consider how well the learned gentleman, who had accused others of ignorance of the original constitution of the Bank of England, himself understood that original constitution. But here again he must clear himself from any imputation of having said any thing against the insolvency of the Bank. He blamed the Bank for the servility with which they obeyed the illegal Order in Council. How far that order would hereafter turn out to be wise, was another question. He said nothing against the accommodation which the Bank had given to the public; on the contrary, he believed that their discounts had been of service to commerce at large. His observation was this: that if they knew their former discounts would not be good unless they continued to dis-

count, the bills which they had already discounted could not be taken as assets in their hands to the full amount of such discounts ; and therefore the Committee was not justified in considering such bills as assets in the hands of the Bank to their full amount. Gentlemen misunderstood him, for he did not mean to say the Bank was insolvent ; he only found fault with the manner in which this matter was stated. He did not blame the Committee for this ; it was a mere oversight for which they were excusable ; no man would suppose that he should be eager to blame a Report which was the unanimous opinion of a Committee, when one of its Members (Mr. Grey) was a person for whom he had so much esteem, and who, he knew, would never spare himself any trouble while he had a hope that his exertions would be serviceable to the public ; but his duty demanded of him these observations ; for this Report, unless understood as he had stated it, would mislead the public as to the real assets in the hands of the Bank.

With regard to the debt of eleven millions from Government to the Bank, the learned gentleman had made an enormous calculation of its value ; he had stated it to be worth for sale near sixteen millions. It was no such thing, unless Government chused to make them a present of it ; it was only an annuity of three hundred and thirty thousand a year, no part of the capital of which could the Bank be entitled to from Government for sixteen years. In this interval they could have only three hundred and thirty thousand pounds a year. There was also a statement in the Report, which, if not looked into, would mislead the public. So far was there from being eleven millions as assets this day in the hands of the Bank, it would not amount to six millions ; but this was only an observation on the mistaken description of the assets in the hands of the Bank, in which the Report described that to be five, and the learned gentleman about ten millions more than it was worth. This mistake of the Committee arose from not specifying the nature of the debt from Government to the Bank ; and the mistake of the learned gentleman arose from not recollecting, that, in this, Bank Stock 4 per cent. dividend had been added to the original 3 per cent. interest.

But it seemed, from the observations of the learned gentleman, that the holders of Bank notes are not the only creditors of the Public ; there are others whose claims are of superior exigency—the army and the navy. That soldiers, coming from barracks where they can learn no sympathy with the Public in any calamity, with arms in their hands, and who have to deal with a Government whose system they know to be terror, should be duns, and pretty

successful duns, he was ready to admit ; but that their claims upon the Bank of England for specie was superior to the Proprietors of stock, or the holders of Bank paper, was a proposition which he begged leave to deny ; nor did it appear that the Bank thought so previous to the issuing of this Order in Council. He apprehended that the first duty of the Bank was to keep faith with its own creditors, for that was the way for them to fulfil the trust that was reposed in them, and a deviation from which was a public breach of faith. But it seemed they were in no case to refuse to accommodate the public by aiding Government. They had never done so ; and if they should, they forfeited their charter. How stood that fact ? Did they not actually refuse, in the year 1783, in an instalment upon the loan, by which refusal stocks fell 14 or 15 per cent. ? but no man told them then, that for that refusal they should have their charter wrested out of their hands. The question was, Whether the Bank had not exceeded their duty upon this occasion ? and that was a question which the House should have clearly stated before them on the face of the transaction, to form a clear judgement upon it. There was an assertion of the Minister, that this proceeding was necessary, but there was no evidence of that necessity ; and how could the House proceed to give a legislative sanction to a measure, of the necessity of which there was no proof before them ? It was stated, that if Government were to pay the Bank five millions to-morrow, it would not relieve them from the present pressure. Why not ? Could they not purchase bullion with it ? Really this mode of stating difficulties he did not understand : but this was a system fraught with the most dreadful evils ; it was of the same complexion as that which laid the foundation of the ruin of the French finances, and led to all the horrors which have been so much deplored in that country. The measure of the act in Council to stop the payment of the Bank, was as violent as if it had been directed to any banker or private individual to lay hold of the cash in his coffers, and rob him of it, under the pretence that it was intended for the public use. The Minister told us, the Committee had not reported enough upon this subject. He agreed with him they had not ; there needed no ghost to come from the grave to tell what we all knew already ; and certainly they had told nothing which we did not all know already. But he did not see that Ministers had laid before the House any ground for a bill ; what need had they of a bill, while it was notorious they would proceed without it, and as notorious, that the Bank would obey them ? If they acted illegally, he thought they ought to be left to their peril ; there was no reason why the House should aid them, since they did not condescend to give

any proof of the necessity of their conduct. They had shewn they could commit robbery ; and as they did not offer any evidence of the necessity of any one thing, why should the House give them leave to bring in a bill to indemnify themselves? They ought, in his opinion, to be left to themselves, to go on in their own way, without the sanction of Parliament. He warned the House of the effect of giving to Ministers this facility of breaking the public faith ; it would only encourage them to treat all ideas of responsibility with contempt ; and there was no possibility of knowing where their desperation would end. He believed that we should not long be able, after the inundation of paper to which this system gave birth, to stop them from making Bank notes legal tender, and then adieu to the appearance of specie at the Bank, and soon afterwards to the real value of the Bank note. These ideas pressed very much upon his mind ; but as he always wished to give way to the opinion of his right honourable friend (Mr. Fox), who thought it proper that leave should be given to bring in this bill, he should not divide the House upon the present question ; but in the stages of this proceeding he should have motions that should go with it *pari passu*.

Mr. Chancellor PITT observed, that it was unnecessary for him to say much, since the honourable gentleman, though he refused to give legislative sanction to the continuation of the prohibition issued by the Council, allowed that he deemed it necessary—and while he reprobated the measure with his wonted acrimony, declined to operate it by vote. He was the less surprised (notwithstanding the honourable gentleman's language) since he had gone so far as to agree that the Report of the Committee said nothing new—a report which stated the necessity of the measure—because as the honourable gentleman had himself allowed; that he knew when once the measure was taken, the necessity for it would continue, yet he had endeavoured to persuade the House to act contrary to it.

The honourable gentleman had said, that he disliked the measure, because it implied a vindication of Ministers. He begged leave to set the honourable gentleman at ease on that head, and to disclaim all ideas of such implied vindication. All he would say was, that if the restriction was to be continued, it was better to continue it by law than without such sanction. As to the other part, nothing was called for but an inquiry to ascertain whether necessity had induced the measure, and from the result to pronounce on the guilt, or the innocence, of Ministers. If the House were

satisfied the measure must be continued—that they could not judge Ministers but by inquiry, and that by this measure they did not prejudge them, the short question which remained for consideration was, whether they would continue the measure with or without law? A good deal of allusion had been made to the advances of the Bank to Government, as chiefly creating the necessity for the Minute of Council of the 26th of February. To whatever degree those advances might have contributed to that necessity, would be a subject for future discussion; but in the mean time he must again repeat that those advances were not peculiar to the period of his Administration, but had been going on for a great length of time, and had not been felt to be any hardship or inconvenience to the Bank. A considerable part of them were floating advances under the title of anticipation of Land and Malt, of Exchequer Bills which were issued from time to time, and the Bank received these advances back again gradually as the revenue came in; but the whole of this would be matter of discussion when the Secret Committee which he proposed to be revived should make their Report to the House. With respect to the proposition which the honourable gentleman signified his intention of bringing forward on the following day, it certainly could not supersede the necessity of some immediate remedy, which must be applied in the present juncture.

Mr. FOX said, that in differing from his honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan) as to the propriety of voting for the introduction of this bill, it was a difference merely as to propriety, and not to principle. He believed it to be impossible that they should ever differ upon any constitutional principle whatever. It was certainly most true, that in passing this bill they were to enact robbery and fraud, for robbery and fraud it was in direct and heinous characters; but the measure of the 26th of February had made it an imperious necessity that the illegal Order of the Council, which had been illegally obeyed, should now be continued for a limited time by the force of a statute. They were in truth deprived of the powers of deliberation. However wantonly the measure of the 26th of February had been adopted, its execution made a necessity for its continuance. All the other arguments of his honourable friend he fully adopted; and again he must repeat, that in giving his assent to the introduction of this bill, he neither passed an indemnity on the Council for issuing the Order, nor on the Bank for obeying it. The reasons given by the learned gentleman (the Solicitor General) in justification of the measure, and his description of the character of the

Bank, were additional grounds of apprehension to his mind, and would give very serious alarms to the country. According to his doctrine, the public establishment of the Bank was the creature of Government, over which they might exercise whatever power the policy of the moment might dictate, for it was originally created for their use, and to be obedient to their pleasure. What an idea to put forth to the country! Not content with this general doctrine, which identified the Bank with Government, he had gone farther, and had justified the interference of the State, by asserting that the stopping of the money of individuals was a measure of wisdom, useful even to the creditors themselves, because it ultimately tended to their security! According to this doctrine they might dispense with all the laws which had been enacted for the security of the national creditor, on the mere pretext that they thereby consulted his ultimate safety. On this pretext they might lay a tax upon the funds to-morrow, though the law had secured them to be paid in money to the creditors; but this new reason of policy would justify the proceeding by informing the creditors that they had no other means of providing for their security. He deprecated all these false and fatal doctrines, all these deviations from the simplicity of rectitude, from the morals of the Constitution. They were as detestable in their character as they must be ineffectual in their practice. They would serve only to plunge us in ignominy as they precipitated us to ruin, and leave us bankrupts in fame, as well as fortune. Such ever must be the consequence of stratagems that counteracted principles. It was not merely to be ascribed to the impotence of the present Minister that all his expedients for the last fourteen months had only tended to aggravate the calamity which they affected to cure; it was a certain consequence from the incapacity of human nature whenever man attempted by subterfuges, arts, and contrivances, to counteract the eternal and invariable principles of truth and justice, he never failed to expose his presumptuous folly, and to entangle himself more and more in the labyrinth of error. It was wonderful that the right honourable gentleman, looking back to the fate of all his intentions and artifices, should still have confidence in his own powers, or in any powers; as if it were possible for the united wisdom of mankind, by stratagems and expedients, to prevail over the certain effects of an expenditure, beyond the powers and ability of the nation.

Mr. W. SMITH acknowledged that he entertained no doubts as to the solvency of the Bank; but he could by no means agree

with the Solicitor General in his statement of the Constitution of the Bank. He shewed, from a number of clauses in all the acts of Parliament relating to the Bank, that the description which the Solicitor General had given of the Charter of the Bank was utterly unfounded, and that there was a confusion in his ideas about it which must strike the House with astonishment, as coming from a gentleman of his professional eminence. So far from the Bank being the creature of Government, in all the acts of Parliament their independence had been recognized. In the 7th of Queen Anne the words were, "that they had consented to admit a number of new proprietors, in order to accommodate Government with a loan." In the 12th of Queen Anne the words were, "they are willing to undertake the circulation of Exchequer Bills." It was most material that this alarming doctrine of a crown lawyer should be directly refuted. The original subscribers had not, in his opinion, the public service in view so much as their own pecuniary interests; and every subsequent act which had been passed, by which money had been borrowed from the Bank, shewed that the ideas of Parliament corresponded with this opinion, and contradicted the argument of the learned gentleman, Parliament had never assumed a dictatorial controul over the pecuniary concerns of the Bank. Terms on which money was proposed to be borrowed, had repeatedly been offered to the Government and Company, but had never been imposed upon them. Mr. Smith denied that the Governors of the Bank were warranted to sacrifice the interest of the Bank Proprietors to that of the public; as good patriots, and in point of national policy, they might, indeed, be induced to run some risks for the public good, but the immediate object with which they were entrusted, and which they were immediately bound to take care of, was the interest of the Proprietors of Bank Stock. The premium which the Bank gave to the public for the renewal of its charter, was not to compromise its interests with the public, but it was a benefit conferred on the latter, in virtue of which the Directors were empowered to pursue the concerns of the Bank, as might be most for the interest of the Proprietors. Mr. Smith declared, that if the act which had been forced upon the Bank by the Order of Council, had been the Company's own act and deed, it could never have recovered the shock; but, as it was, he had little doubt but it would retrieve its credit. Not that he considered the City Association of Merchants as any criterion, or proof of the credit in which the Bank stood with the public, for he averred that that Association would have signed the paper they did, even if they had known that the

Bank would not pay, because they knew they wanted discounts continually, and the Bank must furnish them with those discounts, and that it was at all events their interest to support the Bank.

Sir JOHN SINCLAIR proposed to leave out the words, "to confirm," and to make the title of the bill only to continue the measure of the Council.

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that the word "confirm" was essential, as the measure itself had been confessedly illegal.

The motion was then put for leave to bring in the bill, which was carried without a division.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer then moved, "That the Secret Committee for inquiring into the affairs of the Bank, be revived, and that it should be referred to the same Secret Committee to inquire into the causes which had produced the Order of Council, and their opinion of the necessity of that measure."

Mr. FOX said, that he should certainly give his negative to the revival of this Committee, constituted as it had been. He had given his reasons plainly. A Committee by ballot to inquire into the conduct of His Majesty's Ministers in a measure that struck a blow at the vitals of the country, from which perhaps all the wisdom and energy of the nation would be unequal to recover us, was not the sort of Committee which either would or ought to satisfy the nation. This was not a time to sport with measures of inquiry; this was not a time to shelter any set of Ministers under abuses that were disgraceful to Parliament. It was a thing notorious that a ballot was a shameful stratagem by which a Minister appointed his own judges. There was a servility in that House in the last Parliament which had enabled the Minister to evade all inquiry, and it was notorious that that servility went the length of adopting one general list of names prepared and packed for the purpose of a ballot. The Committee which it was proposed to revive had been so appointed, to such a Committee he must object, and he should take their sense upon the question. At the same time he thought it necessary to state, that if he should succeed in delivering the House from the obloquy of obedience to the right honourable gentleman's motion, he should certainly propose a Committee for the same purposes, to be appointed by nomination.

Mr. GREY said that he felt a delicacy on the present subject, which he was desirous to state before they proceeded to the question. It was perfectly understood, that the nature of a Secret Committee of that House went only to impose upon its Members that degree of secrecy on the matters that came before them, which their own dis-

cretion might think proper. There was no obligation of secrecy. It was not any divulging of the matter that came before them to say that a majority of the Committee were of opinion that the measure of the 26th of February was called for by necessity, and that the causes of the predicament justified Government in the measure. He, however, did not agree with the majority; he was not satisfied with the evidence which satisfied them; he wanted a more circumstantial inquiry, in which they did not acquiesce. The result of this difference of opinion was, that they finally agreed upon the report now on the table, in which they had avoided all words that tended to give any opinion as to the necessity, or the causes that produced it. Now he submitted to the Committee with what propriety, or to what good purpose, this Committee could be revived, or, at least, why his name should be left on it. The majority that had been convinced without farther inquiry, would be convinced still; and he who could not deliver up his conscience and his honour, must retain the opinion which he had formed on the deliberate examination of all that had been brought before them.

Mr. BASTARD desired to know if any Member of the Committee might be omitted or changed?

Mr. Chancellor PITT said, that by the rules of Parliament, they must have the whole of the Committee or none.

Mr. DENT desired to know of Mr. Grey why, if he was not satisfied with the evidence that had been brought before them, he had not called for more?

Mr. GREY answered, that that was a question which he must put to the majority of the Committee. He was not satisfied—they were.

Mr. DENT could not see that this was an answer to his question. Why did he not persevere in demanding more evidence.

Mr. GREY said, he must address these questions to his friends on the Treasury Bench.

After a few more words, the Committee divided—Ayes, 174; Noes, 65.

The Secret Committee was therefore revived.

Mr. SHERIDAN then renewed the motion which he had made before, that the right honourable Charles James Fox be added to the Committee. He did it, he said, from the persuasion that his unparalleled talents and established integrity would point him out to all England as the man to whom an inquiry so important ought to be committed. He was sure that, if the Bank themselves had the

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